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THE JOHNS HOPKINS STUDIES IN ROMANCE LITERATURES
AND LANGUAGES

VOLUME XII

**The Forerunners of Feminism
in French Literature of the Renaissance
From Christine
of Pisa to Marie de Gournay**

A DISSERTATION

*SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES OF THE
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY IN CONFORMITY WITH
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY*

BY

LULA McDOWELL RICHARDSON

THE JOHNS HOPKINS PRESS
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

LES PRESSES UNIVERSITAIRES
DE FRANCE, PARIS

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1929

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INTRODUCTION

The history of feminism has already been the subject of numerous studies. Many works have been devoted to a discussion of the condition of women in society at various periods in the development of occidental civilisation (1). Those historians who elect as their specialty the study of law, have paid careful attention to the modifications which legislation dealing with women has undergone during the centuries. If one were to attempt to give a complete history of feminism, it would be necessary to go back to the very dawn of civilisation. Considered as a minor by Roman law (a tradition which was perpetuated for centuries in the development of French law), treated often by the Church and canon law as a weak and dangerous creature, often the victim of public opinion which has always insisted upon a double standard of morality, woman has found herself relegated in general to a status of subor-

1. ABENSOUR, L., *Histoire générale du féminisme des origines à nos jours*, Paris, 1921.

ABENSOUR, L., *La Femme et le féminisme avant la Révolution*, Paris, 1923.

ASCOLI, G., "Essai sur l'histoire des idées féministes en France du XVI^e siècle à la Révolution," *Revue de synthèse historique*, 1906, pp. 25-57, 161-184.

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HURTREL, M^{me}, *La Femme, sa condition sociale depuis l'antiquité à nos jours*.

LEFRANC, Abel, *Grands écrivains français de la Renaissance*, Paris, Champion, 1914 (vol. 2).

LEFEVRE, M., *La Femme à travers l'histoire*, Paris, 1902.

OSTROGORSKI, *La Femme au point de vue du droit public*, Paris.

ROUSSELOT, P., *Histoire de l'éducation des femmes en France*, 2 vols. Paris, Didier, 1883.

dination and inferiority. Even outstanding and brilliant exceptions have not served to overthrow this well-founded tradition which has constantly attached itself to the sex. France, although a country in which the Salic Law has generally prevailed, has nevertheless, from time to time, been subjected to the rule of women as regents. Many of these have been celebrated by contemporary historians either for their virtues and merits, or for their force of character and political genius. Blanche of Castille, the mother of St. Louis, has become a sort of national heroine in France. Historians and chroniclers have not failed to praise the courage of many a noble lady of the Middle Ages, who, in the absence of her husband, directed the defense of her château in case of its attack by rebellious vassals or a foreign invader. Jeanne d'Arc exercised an almost miraculous influence over the common soldiers, and swayed them at her will by virtue of her military genius. Catherine de Medici, although frequently represented as an unscrupulous and criminal character, none the less maintained and saved the throne for her sons, and her political ability is indubitable. But all of these exceptions have only served, it seems, to prove the rule of the weakness and incompetency of the sex, and have not sufficed to alter or even to modify the current public opinion.

Women, however, would not have been human if they had been content to accept this state of affairs without protesting that they were being unjustly treated. By the very force of circumstances the rebellion that many undoubtedly made against such injustice must have been frequently an inaudible one. Without a doubt the sex had its champions, its defenders, but it is a remarkable thing that in the Middle Ages, at least, there was a decided difference between the theoretical adoration of woman and the common practice; between the *amour courtois* and the manner in which she was treated in society by her contemporaries, including always those who painted such idyllic portraits of woman and the *amour courtois* in their writings.

The *esprit* and *amour courtois*, which are universally recognized as inherent characteristics of chivalry, were

in part an expression of the ancient Teutonic idea that women have a certain mystic power of prescience which is denied to men. The homage offered to the Virgin Mary was accorded by virtue of both her virginity and her maternity. The high regard shown her in religious worship, and the equally lofty conception of women held by the *chevaliers* did not appear in the sphere of every day moral practice. On the contrary, they existed only as theories in the imagination of wandering knights, poets and cloistered monks. " This pseudo-spiritual severance of a visionary ideal from moral reality has merely an aesthetic value, and fails to bring the true dignity of women into definite and practical recognition (1). " Such disparate views regarding the sex are what might easily be expected from the dualistic spirit of the Middle Ages.

Like many other important currents of modern thought, feminism began in reality in the sixteenth century, and has continued in an uninterrupted development until the present day. To be sure, feminist agitations have not always made themselves manifest with the same degree of power, but it is none the less true that from the time of the Renaissance the problem has been put before us in all of its essential features. These aspects are varied, and have differed according to the period, the taste of the authors, and the fashion of the day. At times one particular side of the question has been placed in full relief, while others have been relegated to the background, as if considered of comparative unimportance. The two main questions which have received most detailed attention are the following : first, is there an inferiority in the moral and intellectual resources of women ? In case this question receives a negative answer, another follows logically upon it : is not society unjust when it refuses to woman those facilities to develop her mind and character which are freely accorded to man ? In the second place (and this question has called forth disputes even more violent than those occasioned by the first), is it not flagrantly unjust to maintain a double standard of morality ? Should

(1) *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, V, *Emancipation* (A. Dorner), p. 272.

it not be admitted in this case, as in others, that what is permitted to men should likewise be permitted to women ? This point must be clearly defined, for at that time, when feminism was still in a nascent state, there was in no sense of the word any intention on the part of any feminist, even the most radical, to impose upon man a standard of morality as lofty as that which custom and convention demanded of woman. The problem was simply to determine whether woman might not, or did not claim for herself an indulgence and a liberty equivalent to those enjoyed by man in questions of morality. Although these have been the essential points of the debate, it was inevitable that other rather different problems should gradually become inextricably connected with them. Among these are the following : the education of women and the subjects which it was suitable for them to study, the right of parents to dispose of their daughters in marriage without consulting them, and to impose upon the daughters husbands chosen by the parents, the right of the husband and wife to resume their liberty after marriage, free love, trial marriage, and the right of a wife to be faithless to an inconstant husband. To these problems were added still later the consideration of the religious and political privileges that woman might enjoy. Appeal was made to the Bible, to history, to a sense of justice, to the best interests of the State, to the safety of the family, and finally to the best interests of woman herself in an effort to solve the problems presented. To give a complete history of the feminist movement would therefore necessitate, it is evident, the reconstruction, from a certain definite angle, of the history of social ideas and customs during the last four centuries.

It has been necessary, therefore, to limit our study to the history of feminism as portrayed in the literature of this period. This does not mean that all of the works consulted were chosen from among those having a great aesthetic value, but rather that all of them were so written as to be easily accessible and of interest to the general public of their day. This consideration has necessitated the elimination of all purely legal, theological and medical treatises, in which our questions may be more or less

incidentally treated. Many works which may be classed as manifestations of the *esprit gaulois* have been deliberately omitted. The *esprit gaulois* cannot be taken seriously, since it is after all largely an eternal literary tradition. Moreover, the *esprit gaulois*, in its commonly accepted Anglo-Saxon interpretation of "obscene" literature, has, properly speaking, no place in the investigations which have formed the basis for this study. Even in the centuries which the development of feminism has occupied, a limitation has proved necessary, and it has been decided to terminate the present investigation with a study of Molière (1). One of his immediate successors, the curious and interesting Poulain de la Barre, was in many respects a modernist, and foreshadowed in his works the more daring and more inclusive feminist claims that appeared in the eighteenth century, and which resulted in a short and violent explosion at the time of the French Revolution. But with Molière ended that period of preparation for these more radical demands which has been the field of our investigation.

(1) *The Forerunners of Feminism in French Literature*, vol. II, *The Seventeenth Century*, will be published shortly.

CHAPTER I

THE ORIGINS

JEAN DE MEUNG AND CHRISTINE DE PISAN

Feminism, such as we have defined it in our introduction, did not become an important movement in France until the Renaissance. And yet, in the preceding century this very question had already been the cause of a quarrel, the study of which cannot be neglected. It was during the course of this quarrel that the arguments *pro* and *con* were first formulated that were to reappear more or less frequently in the following centuries. It was this discussion also which gave to the adversaries a chance to measure their comparative strength.

At the very dawn of the fifteenth century this dispute began, and among its participants appeared a woman, the first of her sex to protest in writing against the scurrilous attacks that had been made upon it for so long a time, and more particularly to defend it against the scathing denunciations made by Jean de Meung in the *Roman de la Rose*. This woman was Christine de Pisan, precursor of the learned women of the French Renaissance.

No literary production of the Middle Ages was more widely discussed than the *Roman de la Rose*. Its popularity can be judged from the numerous translations that were made, from the number of manuscripts extant, from the paintings and tapestries showing scenes from the poem, and from the frequent references to it in the works of contemporary writers and their successors. It was this well-known work that Christine attacked, or rather the second part of it, for there was a difference in tone between

the two parts, particularly with reference to love and women (1).

More than a century had elapsed since Jean de Meung had made public his part of the romance (1275-1280), — in which he had attacked with all his might the conception of *amour courtois* so well portrayed by his predecessor, Guillaume de Lorris, and had endeavored to replace a love that was spiritual by one that was purely physical, — before we have any record of any protest in literature against his teachings. It has already been indicated that Christine was concerned in this attack, but she was not alone. There were others who had not approved of his methods and his conclusions, and a very bitter quarrel arose between Gerson, chancellor of the University of Paris, and certain admirers and disciples of the poet, such as Jean de Montreuil, Gontier Col, and his brother Pierre. Christine was Gerson's able supporter in this dissension. Her attacks upon Jean de Meung are all the more interesting, since upon many points she is in complete harmony with him (2).

The story may not be true which relates that a number of court ladies were going to whip Jean de Meung because of his scurrilous attacks upon their sex. The fact remains that Christine is the first to appear publicly as its champion, the same Christine who is called

« Un des plus authentiques *bas-bleus* qu'il y ait dans notre littérature, la première de cette insupportable

(1) « Guillaume de Lorris était le plus dévot officiant du culte chevaleresque voué à la femme, le plus fervent adepte de la doctrine courtoise, le cœur le plus épris de cette morale précieuse qui s'était développée d'abord dans l'aristocratie de France et Champagne.

Jean de Meung... s'attaque à l'édifice sentimental dont la première pierre avait été posée sur le sol de France par Eléonore d'Aquitaine. Les grâces, la mondanité, la gentillesse sont des notions étrangères à son esprit ; sa conception plate et positive des choses de l'amour... combat l'idée courtoise ». (Faral, Ed., « *Le Roman de la Rose* et la pensée française au XII^e siècle », *Revue des deux mondes*, 15 septembre 1926, pp. 436, 439).

(2) The stages in the quarrel are listed by Ward, C. F., *The Epistles on the Romance of the Rose and other Documents in the Debate*, Univ. of Chicago Diss., 1911, pp. 6-10.

Cf. also Langlois, Ernest, « Le Traité de Gerson contre le *Roman de la Rose* », *Romania*, XLV, p. 23.

lignée de femmes auteurs, à qui nul ouvrage sur aucun sujet ne coûte, et qui pendant toute la vie que Dieu leur prête, n'ont affaire que de multiplier les preuves de leur infatigable facilité, égale à leur universelle médiocrité (1). »

(Lanson, *Histoire de la littérature française*,
17^e édition, Paris 1924 p. 167).

It is probable that this young woman, born in Italy and coming as a girl to Paris where she received a large part of her education, and where she married a man occupying an official position at the court, saw, as only a person coming from another land could, the real condition of the women of France. Thus the first woman to resent the accusations of Jean de Meung and his disciples and to defend those women whom she always considered her compatriots, was, properly speaking, a foreigner.

Christine was highly qualified to act as a champion, for her education was far superior to that of most of the women of her day. Among other acquisitions made in the field of learning she had become a good Latin scholar and her work shows frequently the influence of wide reading in the Latin authors (e. g. *Le chemin de long estude*). She owed much also to her knowledge of Italian. Perhaps the fact that she, left a young widow with three small children, had to enter into several lawsuits in an effort to recover her heritage after her husband's death, only at last to lose practically all of it in the struggle, may explain the zeal with which she espoused the cause of her much maligned sex. She realized, as few of her contemporaries seemed to do, that it was rather futile and inconsistent to sing of chivalric love to a society that was accepting with enthusiasm such disparagements of women as those found in the *Roman de la Rose*. If such attacks were justifiable how could there be a "culte de la femme" (2)?

(1) Certainly a very slight study of French literature from mediaeval to modern times would indicate the injustice and inaccuracy of such a sweeping generalization, one which M. Lanson has wisely omitted from the latest edition of his book.

(2) Cf. BÉDIER et HAZARD, *Histoire de la littérature française*, 2 vols., Larousse, 1923, I, p. 90.

Perhaps nowhere is this juxtaposition of the *esprit gaulois* and the *esprit courtois* more clearly seen than in the *Roman de la Rose* (1).

Christine, indeed, had not waited for the outbreak of the controversy between Gerson and the disciples of Jean de Meung to appear in public as a defender of her sex ; nor was it only in the *Roman de la Rose* that she found grounds for complaint against those whom she considered slanderers of women. Already in 1399, two years before her first participation in writing in the quarrel above mentioned, she had entered the lists by writing her *Epistre au dieu d'amours*. She had marked out also, as an enemy of her sex, Mathéolus, a poet of the thirteenth century who had written a Latin poem, directed against women in general and his own wife in particular, entitled *Liber de infortunis suis* (translated into French by Jean Lefèvre *Le Livre de la lamentation de Mathéolus*, Paris, 1492). She specifically mentions this book in *la Cité des dames*, 1404.

Christine, a mere woman and practically unknown, entered into the lists against authors whose reputations were already well established. She had before her men who had not only attacked her sex, but who had in many cases grossly insulted it. She proceeded to give them, calmly and deliberately, the lesson in good manners which she felt they so sadly needed. From time to time she affected a pretended ignorance and incompetence which concealed her real malice and irony. Before she had finished she had proved to her contemporaries that she not only knew how to defend herself and her sex, but also how to launch well-aimed attacks, when such proved necessary.

The first work of Christine's which can be properly classed among those in which she defends her sex is, as has already been indicated, the *Epistre au dieu d'amours* (1399). Her method of attack is rather unexpected, for far from arguing that women are equal in intelligence, culture and

(1) Yet an examination of the literature of the Middle Ages alone would show that these co-existent manifestations seemed to offer no contradiction to the French mind, for side by side with the *romans courtois* are to be found the *fabliaux* (Cf. BÉDIER, J., *Les Fabliaux*, Paris, 1925, pp. 365, 366).

education to men, or demanding for them equal privileges educationally or politically, she begins by stating that those who are combining to slander and malign her sex (so grossly) are guilty of base ingratitude. They are ungrateful because woman is the ever-present aid of man ; she is his nurse as an infant, she cares for him during his lifetime, and it is again she who prepares his body for burial. That man is, therefore, most rude, and lacking in recognition of the services that have been rendered him by woman, who calls her faithless, cruel, inconstant, vain, and altogether worthless.

« ...Dieux, quelles assemblées
 Ou les honneurs des dames sont emblées !
 Et quel profit vient d'ainssi diffamer
 A ceulx meismes qui se deussent armer
 Pour les garder et leur honneur deffendre ?
 Car tout homme doit avoir le cuer tendre
 Envers femme qui a tout homme est mere
 Et ne lui est ne diverse n'amere
 Ainçois souefve, doulce et amiable,
 A son besoing piteuse et secourable,
 Qui tant lui a fait et fait de services,
 Et de qui tant les œuvres sont propices
 A corps d'omme souefvement nourrir ;
 A son naistre, au vivre et au morir,
 Lui sont femmes aidans et secourables,
 Et piteuses, doulces et serviabes.
 Si est celui maucognoiscent et rude
 Qui en mesdit, plein d'ingratitude ».

(Roy, M. ed., *Œuvres poétiques de Christine de Pisan. Société des anciens textes français*, 3 vols., Paris, 1891, vol. 2, p. 6).

After this general reproach directed against men who have scorned her sex, she passes on to more detailed attacks. In the first place, they are much too sweeping in their statements, much too prone to generalizations. It is certainly true that there are women who deserve all the bitter things that may be said of them, but, on the other hand, there are many who are pure, virtuous and altogether lovely. But the various maligners who have written in French or in Latin, in verse or in prose, have not hesi-

tated to class all women together as the object of their malicious hatred. She implies that such criticism means that its authors have known only evil women.

« Mais qui male femme scet, si s'en gart
Sanz diffamer ne le tiers ne le quart
Ne trestoutes en general blasmer
Et tous leurs meurs feminins diffamer ;
Car moult en fu, est et sera de celles
Qui a louer sont com bonnes et belles
Et ou vertus et grâces sont trouvées,
Sens et valeur en bonté esprouvées...
Li autres dit que moult sont decevables,
Cautilleuses, faulses et pou valables.
Autres dient que trop sont mençongieres,
Variables, inconstans et legieres.
D'autres pluseurs grans vices les accusent
Et blasment moult, sanz que rien les excusent.
Et ainsi font clers et soir et matin,
Puis en françois, leurs vers, puis en latin,
Et se fondent dessus ne sçay quelz livres
Qui plus dient de mençonges qu'un yvres. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 7, 9, 10).

One cannot even allege, as some of her predecessors and contemporaries had done, that the great writers had united in condemning women as contemptible and guilty of every vice, for there have been many who have defended them ; and, says Christine, it is more than probable that these men who are so severe towards women passed most of their own lives being false to them, and are no better than the type of woman to whom their criticism might legitimately apply.

« Et s'aucun dit qu'on doit les livres croire
Qui furent fais d'hommes de grant memoire
Et de grant sens, qui mentir ne daignerent,
Qui des femmes les malices proverent.
Je leurs respons que ceulz qui ce escripent
En leurs livres, je trouve qu'ilz ne quistrent
En leurs vies fors femmes decepvoir ;
N'en pouvoient yceulz assez avoir,
Et tous les jours vouloient des nouvelles .»

(*Ibid.*, p. 11).

Among other proofs of the dignity and worth of woman, she employs an argument which is quite in harmony with an age where theology exerted so great an influence, namely, that God had created her in his own image, and in addition had chosen her to be the mother of Jesus Christ. Also he made her of finer material than that from which man was formed, for she was created from bone and he from dust, — therefore she is nobler than man. Furthermore, she may claim superiority because from the old stories of the Bible ; — which according to Christine's naïve statement cannot be lies, — we learn that she was created in Paradise, while man was not. This type of argument is one that is found frequently in the sixteenth and even in the seventeenth century, and is used by both men and women writers, who prove by it, and with equal success, that woman is superior or inferior to man.

« Grant honneur fist a femme Dieu le pere
 Qui faire en vult son espouse et sa mere,
 Temple de Dieu a la Trinité jointe
 Bien estre doit femme joyeuse et cointe
 Qui autelle, comme Celle, fourme a ;
 Car oncques Dieux nulle rien ne fourma
 De digneté semblable, n'aussi bonne,
 Fors seulement de Jhesus la personne.

Dieu la forma a sa digne semblance.
 Et lui donna savoir et cognoissance.
 Pour soy sauver, et don d'entendement.
 Si lui donna fourme moult noblement,
 Et fut faitte de moult noble matiere,
 Car ne fu pas du lymon de la terre
 Mais seulement de la coste de l'omme,
 Lequel corps ja estoit, c'en est la somme,
 Le plus noble des choses terriennes.
 Et les vrayes hystoires anciennes
 De la Bible, qui ne puet mençonge estre.
 Nous racontent qu'en Paradis terrestre
 Fu formée femme premierement »...

(*Ibid.*, pp. 19, 20).

Then follow various passages in which she boasts of her sex by citing famous examples of its constancy even in face

of the inconstancy of men, such as Medea, Dido, and Penelope (1) ; by saying that they could not have been frivolous and yielded themselves easily to men, or Ovid and Jean de Meung would not have written such lengthy treatises on how to capture a woman's love (for why should skill and force be necessary to capture something weak and easy to take ? says Christine).

« Car pour chastel pris ne fault guerre entreprendre.
 Quel long procès ! quel difficile chose !
 Et sciences et cleres et obscures
 Y met il la et de grans aventures !
 Et que de gent soupploiez et rovez
 Et de peines et de baraz trouvez
 Pour decepvoir sanz plus une pucelle,
 S'en est la fin, par fraude et par cautelle !
 A foible lieu faut il donc grant assault ?
 Comment peut on de près faire grant saut ?
 Je ne sçay pas ce veoir ne comprendre
 Que grant peine faille a foible lieu prendre,
 Ne art n'engin, ne grant soubtiveté ».

(*Ibid.*, p. 13).

After such statements Christine returns to her first claim, and says that instead of criticising and slandering women, men should prize, cherish and love the sex from which man is descended ; that they should return them good for evil, for a normal man is never happy without women who are to him mother, sister and friend.

« Je conclus que tous hommes raisonnables,
 Doivent femme prisier, cherir, amer,
 Et ne doivent avoir cuer de blasmer
 Elles de qui tout homme est descendu ;
 Ne leur soit pas mal pour le bien rendu,
 Car c'est la riens ou monde par droiture
 Que homme aime mieulz et de droitte nature.
 Si est moult lait et grant honte a blasmer
 La riens qui soit que l'en doit plus amer
 Et qui plus fait a tout homme de joye.
 Home naturel sanz femmes ne s'esjoye.

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

C'est sa mere, c'est sa suer, c'est s'amie,
Et pou avient qu'a homs soit anemie ; »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 23, 24).

The next of Christine's works in which she praises and defends her sex, and attacks its detractors is that one in which she for the first time participates in writing in the quarrel over the second part of the *Roman de la Rose*—her reply to the treatise of Jean de Montreuil (of 1400 or 1401). She says that her purpose in entering into the dispute, and specifically in replying to the treatise sent to her and to Gerson by Montreuil, is " a soustenir par defense veritables contre aucunes oppinions a honnestete contraire, et aussi l'onneur et louange des femmes, laquelle plusieurs clerks et auteurs se sont efforciez par leurs dictiez d'amenuisier, qui n'est chose loisible ne a souffrir ne a soustenir ".

(Cited in Kastenbergh, M., *Die Stellung der Frau in den Dichtungen der Christine de Pisan*, Darmstadt Dissertation, 1909, p. 13).

She addresses Jean de Montreuil with great respect, and speaks of herself with pretended modesty and humility, disclaiming her learning and ability. This lack of confidence which she pretends to feel in her own ability does not, however, render her helpless before what she calls the enormous learning of Jean de Montreuil when he dares to support such a work as the *Roman de la Rose* (1).

On the contrary, a careful consideration of his treatise has led even her so-called limited intelligence to protest vigorously against its receiving such wholesale, and, to her mind, unmerited, praise, for it is a work which should never in her opinion be regarded as useful or valuable. Again she covers her malice by pretending to be modest, saying that she is presumptuous in daring to repudiate so serious and important an author, that her language is not sufficiently subtle, nor her style sufficiently polished to enable her to compete with her opponent, but that she

(1) (Ward, C. F., *The Epistles on the Romance of the Rose and Other Documents in the Debate*, Univ. of Chicago Diss., 1911, p. 17).

must express her opinion, even though it be poorly done (1).

« ...je, ayant leu et considéré vostre dicte prose et compris l'effect selons la legiereté de mon petit engin... vueil dire... que... a grant tort et sans cause donnez si parfaite louenge a celle dicte oeuvre, qui mieulx puet estre appelé (e) droicte oisueté que oeuvre utile, a mon jugement... et... ne me soit imputé a presumption d'oser repudier et reprendre aucteur si solennel et tant subtil. Mais soit nottée la ferme et grant oppinion, qui me meut contre aucunes particularitez qui ou dit (traictié) sont comprises. Et, au fort, chose qui est dicte par oppinion et non de loy commandee se puet redarguer sans prejudice...

...en quelle maniere puet estre valable et a bonne fin ce que tant et si excessiueusement, impetueusement, et tres nonveritablement accuse, blasme et diffame femme de plusieurs tresgrans vices, et leurs meurs tesmoingne estre pleins de toute peruersité et par tant de replices et aucques en tous parçonnages ne s'en puet saouler. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 17, 18, 22).

Nothing, however, can prevent her vigorous protest against the injustice of the statements made by the author of the *Roman de la Rose* to the prejudice of her sex, and likewise against Montreuil for championing its author. What, says she, can be the value of any book in which women are accused unjustly and untruly of great vices ; where they are said to have very evil manners ; where married women are accused of deceiving their husbands ? (a state of which Jean de Meung could not have spoken from experience, as Christine points out, and about which he none the less makes broad generalizations) ; when such accusations will serve no other purpose than to render husbands suspicious and so destroy the peace and harmony of the family. But far more serious in her mind is the fact that *all* women are equally maligned, instead of only those who give real cause for such censure.

This would seem to prove that the author had never

· Cf. WARD, p. 18.

known a virtuous nor honorable woman, but only those who were thoroughly dissolute and immoral (1).

« Et encore tant superfluellement et laidement parla des femmes mariees, qui si deçoivent leurs maris, duquel estat ne pot sauoir par experience et tant en parla generaument. A quelle bonne fin pot ce estre, ne quel bien ensuiure, n'y scay entendre fors empeschement de bien et de paix de mariage, et rendre les maris qui tant oyent babuises et fatras, se foy y adioustent, souspeçonneux et pou amans de leurs femmes... Mais vraiment puisque en general ainsi toutes blasma, de croire par ceste raison suis contrainte, que oncques n'ot acointance ne hantise de femme honnourable ne vertueuse ; mais par plusieurs femmes dissolues et de male vie hanter... cuida ou faingny sauoir que toutes telles fussent ; car d'aultres n'auoit cognoissance. Et se seulement eust blasmé les deshonestes et conseillé elles fuir, bon enseignement et iuste seroit ; mais non, ains sans excepcion toutes les accuse. Mais se tant aultre les mettes de raison se chargia l'auteur d'elles accuser ou iugier non veritablement, blasma aucun n'en doit estre imputé à elles, mais a celui qui si loins de vérité dist la mensonge, qui n'est mie creable comme le contraire appere manifestement ».

(*Ibid.*, 23,24).

That such wholesale generalizations are not only unjust, but also absolutely untrue, Christine proceeds to prove by enumerating many women more valiant, more honorable, more learned and of greater benefit to humanity, more virtuous, more faithful to their husbands and more worth-while in every respect than could be proved for representatives of the opposite sex. Among these are to be found women of the Bible — Sarah, Rebecca, Esther and Judith, — and noblewomen of France, such as queen Jeanne, Blanche of Castille, the duchesses of Orléans and of Anjou and many others, all of whom have brought no small amount of fame and honor to their sex. Again Christine uses a type of argument that

(1) Here she repeats a point which she had made earlier in *L'Epistre au dieu d'amours*.

is to reappear with great frequency in following centuries, and one which she owes perhaps to Boccaccio (1).

« Car se il et tous ses complices en ce cas l'eussent iuré, ...il a esté, est et sera moult de plus vaillans femmes plus honnestes, mieulx moriginees et meismes plus sauans et dont plus grant bien est ensuiui au monde que oncques ne fist de sa personne, meismement en policie mondaine et en meurs vertueux tres enseignees, et pluseurs qui ont esté cause de reconcillement de leurs maris et porté leurs affaires et leurs secrez et leurs passions doulcement et secretement, non obstant leurs fussent leurs maris rudes et malamoreux. De ce treuue l'en assez preuues en la Bible, et es autres anciennes hystoires, come Sarra, Rebecha, Ester, Judic, et autres assez. Et mesmes en noz aages auons veu en France moult de vaillans femmes, grans dames et auitres de noz dames de France : la sainte devote royne Jehanne, la royne Blanche, la duchece d'Orliens, fille de roy de France, la duchece d'Aniou ...qui tant orent beauté, chasteté, honnesteté et sauoir, et autres assez. Et de mendas vaillans preudefemmes comme madame de la Ferté, femme messire Pierre de Craon, qui moult fait a louer, et assez d'autes qui trop seroit longue narracion dire plus. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 23, 24.).

Once more she expresses the hope that what she is saying will not be considered as originating from a prejudiced mind, for she has endeavored constantly to speak fairly, all the more so since she is aware of the prejudices that may be imputed to her because of her sex (2).

Christine finally expresses her opinion in no uncertain terms of the work of Jean de Meung, and of the evil influence which it might exert upon social standards, as well as other writers. Such a statement is made more important if we remember that she alone, among her women contemporaries, dared to criticise publicly so popular a piece of literature. She says that it is an exhorta-

(1) Cf. BOCCACCIO, *De claris mulieribus*.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

tion to vice, a comfort to those leading a dissolute life, and a road leading to damnation — strong language indeed from a fifteenth century woman.

« ...Je dis que c'est exortacion de vice, confortant vie dissolue, doctrine pleine de deceuance, voyes de dampnacion, diffameur publicque, cause de souspeçon et mescreandise, honte de pluseurs personnes, et peut estre d'erreur ».

(*Ibid.*, p. 27).

Certainly, however, if Jean de Montreuil would examine the evidence calmly and dispassionately, the conclusion at which he would arrive would inevitably be the same as that which she had already established. He would then be obliged to join with her in determined opposition to a work in which one man had dared to condemn without exception her entire sex (1).

But Christine, instead of converting Jean de Montreuil to her way of thinking, found that she had added to the number of her adversaries, and also to the opponents of her sex, for Gontier Col, who had asked her for a copy of the letter sent to Montreuil, wrote and rebuked her sharply for her daring (2).

She, undaunted, replies to him with an attack upon himself and all those who support Jean de Meung, an attack which is remarkable for its force, and in which she again repeats the vigorous condemnation of the *Roman de la Rose* which had already appeared in the letter to Montreuil.

« Ha ! homme d'entendement ingenieux, ne sueffres a propre voullenté tenir close la soubtilleté de ton engin ! Regardes droit selon voye theologienne la plus souueraine, et tu tant ne condempneras mes diz ainsi comme les ay escripts et considereras se louenge affiert es pas particuliers que ilz reprennent. Et toutefois soit bien de toy notté en toutes pars quelz choses je condempne et quelles non. Et se tu tant desprises mes

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

(2) Cf. WARD, pp. 30, 31.

raisons pour la petitece de ma faculté, laquelle tu me reproches de dire comme femme passionnee,... saches de voir que ce ne tiens ie a villenie ou aucun reproche pour le reconfort de la noble memoire et continuele experience de tres grant foison vaillans femmes auoir esté et estre tresdignes de louenge et en toutes vertus apprises, auxquieulx mieuxouldroie ressembler que estre enrichie de tous les biens de fortune ».

(*Ibid.*, pp. 32, 33).

She may be only a woman, says she, but she can defend her sex, for a very small knife can make a big hole in a sack, and a very small rodent can assault and put to flight a lion (1). She is not to be terrified by threats ; indeed they render her all the more daring, and make her second condemnation of Jean de Meung even more vehement than the first. She calls to support her this time all honorable men, for they must undoubtedly be of her opinion.

« Si ne cuides rucunement moy estre meue ne desmeue par legiereté par quoy soye tost desdicte, ja soit ce que en moy disant villenie me menaces de tes subtilles reisons, lesquelles choses sont communement espouementement aux couars. Mais afin que tu puisses retenir en brief ce que au long ay autrefois escript, je dis derechief et replique et triplique tant de fois comme tu voudras que le dit intitulé *Romant de la Rose*, nonobstant y ait de bonnes choses... puet estre cause de mauuaise et peruerse exortacion en tres abhominables meurs, confrontant de vie dissolue, doctrine pleine de deceuance voie de dampnacion, diffameur publique, cause de souspeçon et mescreandise et honte de plusieurs personnes et puet estre d'erreur ; et tresdeshonneste lecture en plusieurs pars. Et tout ce ie vuel et ose tenir et maintenir partout et devant tous et prouuer par lui mesmes et m'en raporter et attendre au iugement de tous iustes preudeshommes, theologiens et vrays catholiques, et gens de honneste et saluable vie ».

(*Ibid.*, p. 33).

(1) Cf. WARD, p. 33

All of the correspondence in which Christine participated during this quarrel shows that she was undoubtedly able to play the role of champion which she had chosen. The fact that she is the only woman participant, and that she has many powerful men against her never seems to cause her to hesitate for an instant. She has recognized her duty, and she does it without flinching at the thought of the possible consequences (1).

* The last episode of the quarrel engaged in by Christine against the detractors of her sex is to be found in the work entitled *Le Livre de la cité des dames*, written between December, 1404 and April, 1405. This work, an anthology in which is gathered together a record of all periods and all social classes that have manifested their talents or their virtues, is based largely upon a similar work of Boccaccio, *De claris mulieribus*. No less than three-fourths of her examples are drawn from Boccaccio's book ; yet if she gives him credit, she does it in a vague manner which gives no clue to the real importance or the amount of her borrowings. It is a more amplified example of a type of argument already noted in the *Epistre au dieu d'amours*, and which was adopted by many authors after the period of Christine ; namely, the citing of many examples, historical or mythological, contemporary or ancient, of women who had possessed various virtues and done many noble deeds. These women are to serve as proofs of the fact that such achievements rendered them, and therefore their whole sex, the equal if not the superior of man (2).

This work was occasioned primarily by a work of the thirteenth century by Mathéolus, *Liber de infortunis suis*, which has been already mentioned. After having read Mathéolus, Christine becomes very melancholy, and is in despair because she belongs to a sex so often, and so bitterly calumniated. While she is thus brooding, three women appear to her, one of whom bids her cease lamenting

(1) Cf. Chapter I, p. 20.

(2) Cf. JEANROY A., « Boccace et Christine de Pisan. Le *De claris mulieribus*, principale source du *Livre de la cité des dames* », *Romania*, vol. XLIII, pp. 93, 94.

and come the defense of her sex. These three women she calls " *Raison*, *Droiture*, and *Justice* ".

Upon the advice, and with the help of *Raison*, Christine proceeds to lay the foundations of her city. While so doing she questions *Raison* about the so-called inferiority of women, and demands why they do not act as lawyers. *Raison*, in order to put to shame those who claim that women had no ability to govern, cites a long line of princesses who had rivalled in wisdom the most famous kings and who had administered their kingdoms perfectly. To the objection that women might perhaps be incapacitated for certain duties of government by their physical weaknesses, *Raison* answers by enumerating women who have rivalled men even as warriors ; whereupon Christine uses them as the cornerstones of her city (1).

Christine then questions if God had ever created women capable of great learning. *Raison*, using Boccaccio as a source, cites various examples, among others Sappho, *la très soultille poete et philosophe* (2).

When she asks if any woman has ever excelled man in the field of pure science, or if she has ever discovered anything before unknown, *Raison* again gives examples drawn solely from Boccaccio — Minerve, " *qui trouva la maniere de faire armeüres de fer et d'acier* ", Cérès, " *qui trouva l'art de labourer les terres et maintes autres arts* ", Areine (Arachne) " *qui trouva l'art de teindre les leines et faire les draps ouvrez que l'on dit de haulte lice* ", Pamphile, " *qui trouva l'art de traire la soie des vers* " and many others (3).

In book two, Christine with the aid of *Droiture*, proceeds to people the city thus founded. At first she uses women famous not for their talents, but for their virtues. She then advances the opinion that fathers should be proud, rather than ashamed of having daughters ; whereupon *Raison* proceeds to give examples of filial love to prove the justice of Christine's assertion. The first women used

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 95, 96.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

(3) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

as inhabitants of the city are those who were inspired by conjugal love to sacrifice or risk their lives for their husbands. These women are used as examples to prove Christine's statement that " la vie de mariage n'est point si dure à porter " (1).

Among other noble qualities possessed by the women suggested by *Droiture* as inhabitants of the city are the following : the ability to keep secrets, to counsel husbands, chastity, constancy. Both Christine and *Droiture* protest against those " qui dient qu'il n'est pas bon que femme apprenne lettres " (2), and *Droiture* offers the illustration of the daughter of a great orator who profited so much by the instruction received from her father that she finally surpassed him in fluency and oratorical powers.

The city once built and peopled, Christine, with the aid of *Justice*, proceeds to adorn it with figures that would undoubtedly arouse fear or respect in the hearts of those who will be its eventual assailants. The third book is thus filled with pictures of the Virgin and the saints to whom *Justice* assigns their places as defenders of *la Cité des dames*.

Perhaps *le Livre de la cité des dames* is more of an embryonic feminist pamphlet than anything else that Christine wrote, since there, as nowhere else, she declares that women have the same aptitude for education as men, and that being thus equally gifted they have an equal right to education.

« Si la coustume estoit de mettre les petites filles à l'escole, et que communement on les fist apprendre les sciences comme on fait aux filz qu'elles apprendroient aussi parfaitement et entenderoient les subtilités de toutes les arz et sciences comme ils font. »

(Cited in Laigle, M., *Le Livre des trois vertus de Christine de Pisan*, Paris, 1912, p. 120, *Bibliothèque du XV^e siècle* vol. XVI).

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 99. It is interesting to note that Christine always defends marriage, never advocating its abolition, while later authors of both sexes were more prone to criticize it, and to dilate upon its defects and the restraints it placed upon women.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

THE FORERUNNERS OF FEMINISM

But according to the author from whom the above citation was made, even anti-feministic ideas are to be found in this work. She gives as one illustration of her assertion the reply to the question already mentioned as to why women do not act as lawyers in place of men. Christine's answer is that there are many reasons, but that one might just as well ask why men do not fill the place of women. Each sex has its tasks, and each is peculiarly adapted by nature to fulfill them. Men are strong, and have sufficient force to cause laws to be executed, while women lack such physical strength. She does not deem it fitting therefore that women should occupy as prominent an official position as men. In other words, Christine does not advocate the eligibility of woman for every position commonly held by men. This might possibly be called an anti-feministic opinion (from our modern point of view), for the extreme feminist of today allows no limitations to be placed upon her sex's ability.

« Pourquoi », lui demandent les adversaires de l'instruction des femmes, « puisque les femmes ont tant d'entendement ne sieent elles pas en siege de plaidorie contre les hommes ? »

« Il y a trop de raisons », répond Christine, « mais on pourroit vous demander pourquoi les hommes ne font ilz les offices des femmes ? » « Chacun a sa tâche, et à chascun sexe donne telle nature et inclination comme à faire son office lui appartient et compete... Les hommes sont hardis et puissans et ont force pour faire executer les lois, ce que ne porroient les femmes. »

« Femmes ont l'entendement, certes, mais pour l'honnesteté ou elles sont enclines, ce ne seroit pas chose convenable que elles se alaissent monstrier en jugement aussi bauldement que les hommes ».

(*Ibid.*, pp. 121, 122).

And yet it would seem that such statements should not properly speaking be called anti-feministic, but accepted rather as a proof of the fact that Christine is not demanding radical reforms which would serve only to antagonize her opponents and ruin the cause which she was seeking to defend. She is asking for no unusual privileges, nothing that would arouse hostile comment, nor is she

counselling rebellion against any established social usages or laws. Her one plea is for justice.

The last of the works of Christine de Pisan to be considered in this study is of a different character. After having made herself known as the champion of her sex, she then desired to become its counselor. In the *Livre des trois vertus* (1405), one of the best of her treatises, we find a complete course of feminine education, the term *education* being used in a wider sense than the mere acquisition of book learning. She gives us a picture of French life in the fourteenth century, for she considers all social classes, and thereby revives for us the society of her day.

Le Livre des trois vertus was written as its author herself says,

« Pour l'accroissement du bien et honneur de toute femme grande, moyenne et petite ».

It is divided into three parts.

« La première partie s'adresse aux princesses et haultes dames. La seconde aux dames et demoiselles et principalement à celles qui demeurent à court de princesse ou haulte dame. Et la tierce, aux femmes d'estat, bourgeoises et femmes du commun pueple. »

(Koch, F., "Über die Werke der Christine de Pisan", *Zeitschrift für neufranzösische Sprache und Litteratur* (VIII), pp. 251-269), p. 264 (1).

All of the things which she proposes in this book are those which would aid in the formation of an intelligent and virtuous woman of her age.

In discussing the education of the young girl, Christine tells us first of all that it is to be less varied than that of her brother. While Christine is demanding an education for women, it is not to be of the same type for the two sexes, and in this she differs from the more radical among her successors, both men and women. As can be seen, religious training was emphasized.

(1) Cf. BÉDIER, J. et HAZARD, P., *Histoire de la littérature française*, 2 vols., Paris, Larousse, 1923, vol. I, p. 90.

« Quant sa fille sera en eage, voudra que elle aprengne a lire. Après ce que elle sara ses heures et son service, que on lui administre livres de devocion ou qui parlent de bonnes meurs ».

(Laigle, p. 166).

She had already expressed the idea that learning was not injurious to a young girl, and cited as proof the opinion of her father.

« Thomas de Pisan, le grand naturien et philozophe, ne oppinoit pas que femmes fussent pires par apprendre ».

(*Chemin de long estude*, cited by Laigle, *op. cit.*, p. 166, note 1.)

And again in the *Cité des dames* she returns to this opinion of her father's which was quite in harmony with her own, — and quite contrary to that of her mother, who held the more conservative view that a purely domestic education was sufficient and advisable, and who tried to prevent too liberal training being given to her daughter, but without great success.

« Ton pere qui fut grammairien et philosophe n'était pas d'opinion que femmes vaulsissent pis par sciences, ains de ce que encline te veoit aux lettres, si que tu scés, y prenait grant plaisir. Mais l'opinion de ta mere qui te vouloit occuper en fillasses, selon l'usage commun des femmes, fut cause de l'empeschement que ne fus en ton enfance plus avant boutée es sciences et plus parfont. Si ne put ta mere si empeschier le sentir des sciences que tu par inclination naturelle ne ayes recueilli a tout le moins de petites gouttelettes, desquelles choses je tiens que tu ne cuides pas valoir mains, ains le te reposes a grant tresor. »

(Cited by Laigle, *op. cit.*, p. 166, note 1.)

This same idea is repeated in the *Cité*, where she says that the acquisition of the moral sciences, which inculcate the principles of virtue and morals, should not be injurious to any woman ; rather such learning should ennoble her, and she considers it incredible that any woman

should become worse because she is educated. This theory is to be repeated by many of Christine's successors.

« Sçavoir les sciences morales et qui enseignent les vertus et les mœurs ne doivent empirer ains n'est point de doute qu'ilz (les femmes) en entendent et anoblissent. Que les femmes empirent de savoir le bien, ce n'est pas à croire ».

(Laigle, p. 185).

Christine does not demand that girls be taught Latin, although she herself was a Latin scholar. This was due perhaps to her desire to be in harmony with the opinions of Gerson, for he was less liberal than her renowned adversary Jean de Meung, who was filled with admiration for Héloïse because of her learning.

The *Livre des trois vertus* is not greatly concerned with the intellectual instruction of women, since after all its main purpose was to serve as a treatise on good manners, and education was regarded merely as an accessory, necessary only so far as to make of its object a well-rounded woman. Learning, to Christine, led inevitably to the refining and uplifting of character, but learning without virtue was dangerous. This idea had already been expressed in the *Chemin de long estude* (1402).

« Car savoir je ne prise riens
Sanz bonté ; bien sieent enesemble. »

(Laigle, p. 187).

Christine has one passage that resembles the famous phrase of Molière, " Je consens qu'une femme ait des clartés de tout ", for when she discusses the question as to the proper extent of a woman's knowledge, her theory is that she should have an understanding of all things, for the person whose knowledge is limited is not really wise.

« Si nous convient adviser comment s'estendra son savoir : c'est qu'elle si sache entendre de toutes choses, car dit le philosophe, que celui n'est pas sage qui ne congnoist aucune part de chascune chose ».

(Laigle, p. 187).

A woman educated according to the plan outlined in this book would be an honor to whichever class of society numbered her among its members.

In conclusion it might be well to summarize the principal points made by this first woman writer, and to see whether or not she offers a program which could be considered revolutionary. We would find that she contributes the following theories :

1° That men who attack women are guilty of ingratitude for they owe them everything.

2° That men are wrong who assail the entire sex and accuse them of sins of which only a few are guilty.

3° That women are really nobler than men and have reason to be proud since they were created of better material, and in a finer place than man, and since God chose woman to be the mother of his Son.

4° That from numerous illustrations, drawn from sacred and profane history, women may be seen to possess many desirable qualities, — such as constancy, fidelity, intelligence, skill as inventors, the ability to govern and to fight.

5° That education should not necessarily be the same for both sexes, for after all there are differences between them ; and since each has its own tasks, we should not expect woman to occupy all of the positions of men, nor should they be educated with such a purpose in view.

6° That education is necessary to the well-rounded woman, and that to a virtuous woman no amount of learning can ever prove injurious.

There is certainly nothing in these statements which could give any one grounds for calling Christine a radical feminist. Rather, she is a woman resentful of the injustice done her sex, and desirous of reëstablishing its virtues and worth in the eyes of her contemporaries (1). She does not demand for woman as complete an education as for man, nor does she feel that it is legitimate for a woman to aspire to all of man's occupations.

And yet, although we may be unwilling to class her

(1) ABENSOUR, L., *La Femme et le féminisme avant la Révolution*, Paris, 1923, Introduction, pp. v, vi.

among those who established a body of feminist principles, it is necessary to recognize the ability and courage of this woman who blazed the trail to be followed by many other more illustrious and more daring successors. She may at least be given credit for having lighted the torch, and after having run her course, of having passed it on to other worthy hands.

M. Abensour goes too far when he finds in her works the first expression of feminism as we know it today, as well as when he bases all of the feministic treatises of succeeding centuries upon the *Trésor des dames* and *la Cité des dames*.⁽¹⁾

(1) Abensour, L., *La femme et le féminisme avant la Révolution*, Paris, 1923, *Introduction*, pp. V, VI.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST PART OF THE CENTURY (1500-1542).

Theology and Morality : Champier, Martin Franc, Erasmus, Sir Thomas More, Agrippa, Ariosto, Lesnauderie, Gratian du Pont, J. Bouchet, Hélienne de Crenne.

In an epoch in which culture and learning were held in as great reverence as in the Renaissance it was practically inevitable that women as well as men should feel the desire for intellectual food. Culture had come to be recognized as a most desirable attainment, and no woman of any importance wished to remain outside the magic circle of the intellectual élite. In Italy many women received exactly the same education as men, and girls and boys studied the same subjects. Nor was this state of affairs limited to Italy ; at the age of twelve, Mary Stuart delivered Latin speeches, at fourteen, Elizabeth of England translated the *Miroir de l'âme pécheresse* of Marguerite de Navarre, and Marguerite herself knew enough Greek to read Plato. There was a difference, however, between the ideal of Italy and France with regard to the intellectual development of women. Many French women of noble birth were just as highly educated ; Latin and even Hebrew were among their studies, and it was claimed that a knowledge of rhetoric was almost as necessary and important as chastity. But at the same time the French woman remained unconquerably faithful to the maxim that woman should reign by virtue of her charm, rather than by her purely intellectual attainments, and that if it were necessary to arm herself for the battle of intellects,

her greatest skill should consist in appearing unarmed, in remaining always *grandes dames et amateurs*.

There was likewise a difference between the intellectual acquisitions of the woman and the man. The Renaissance women did not study everything indiscriminately, nor for the mere satisfaction of acquiring knowledge. They left to one side everything which had no appeal to their imaginations or their emotions. They neglected science, and became enthusiastic over literature and music. The books that they read discussed always the same subjects — women and love. They were philosophers merely because the philosophy in vogue at that period subtilized on the subject of Platonic love (1). In poetry, in the novel and in the *nouvelle*, love was always the principal, if not the sole theme, and the development and predominance of these literary genres during the Renaissance is undoubtedly traceable to feminine influence.

To summarize, the French women of the Renaissance were not interested in becoming *savantes* or *bas bleus*. They selected from the books that they read that which would best satisfy their purpose, which was to become brilliant conversationalists so that they might be able to gather about them a group of admirers. They devoted themselves especially to those forms of literature which dealt with the passions and the emotions. They well understood that if they were to exert the desired influence and to obtain the longed-for power over men they must remain essentially feminine. Therefore they did not protest against the ancient institution of marriage, recognizing that if it were destroyed, the position of women, instead of being improved, would be rendered far worse, since marriage was really a protection to the sex (2).

In such a period it would be natural to expect the production of numerous books and pamphlets dealing directly or indirectly, as a whole or in part, with such problems as the education of woman, her intellectual ability; espec-

(1) Cf. DOUMIC, R., « Le Féminisme au temps de la Renaissance », *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. CXLIX, pp. 921-932.

(2) Cf. MAULDE LA CLAVIÈRE, R. de, *Les Femmes de la Renaissance*, Paris, 1898, p. 387.

ially as compared with that of man, and inquiring whether or not she might aspire to positions commonly considered to be open only to men. Such literary productions would be the work not only of women, who like Christine de Pisan felt that their sex was being unduly and unjustly slandered, but also of those men whose sense of justice and fair play demanded that they come to the defense of a much maligned sex.

The feminist literature of the century falls into three general classes : 1° that in which theological arguments (i. e., the story of Creation, quotations from St. Paul, the responsibility for original sin) are used as proofs of the author's main thesis ; 2° works in which the *esprit des fabliaux* (or the commonly called *esprit gaulois*) dominates ; and 3° that wherein is manifested the *esprit courtois*. It cannot be said that anyone of these types is to be found alone at any one time, nor does it necessarily follow that only one of these currents common to the literature of the sixteenth century is to be found in the work of any given author. It is the fact that more than one appears in the work of a given author that makes it sometimes difficult to estimate accurately his opinion of women. A study of the entire period will show, however, which current was the strongest, and what contributions were made by each.

The first author of the sixteenth century who mentions the subject of women is a French doctor, Symphorien Champier, who published in 1504 at Lyons, and in 1515 at Paris a book entitled *la Nef des dames vertueuses*. This book is divided into four parts : *la Fleur des dames, du Régime du mariage, des Prophéties des sybilles, le Livre du vrai amour*.

Like many another author, Champier complains that too many people have blamed women for all the sins that have been committed. He offers as proof of the dignity and worth of woman the fact that she was created of finer material than man, since the bones of the human body are nobler than dust.

« Il y a ung tas de gens q (qui) p (par) une malice de lāgue enuenemee ont voulu dire que les plus grās et

enormes pechez anciës ont este p (par) petrez p (par)
fêmes (I^{er} livre, I^{re} partie).

Aussi fut formee la femme de plus noble matiere que
l'homme. Car elle fut faicte du corps de l'homme et
l'homme de la terre. Or est il ainsi que le corps humain
est plus noble que la terre. »

(Champier, S., *La Nef des dames vertueuses*, Paris, 1515,
ch. II).

There was, however, a far more important work dealing with this question, which, far from ending the debate between the partisans and adversaries of women that had begun so long before with Jean de Meung and Christine, seemed on the contrary to add fuel to the flame and to make it burn all the more fiercely. This book was *le Champion des dames* written by Martin (Le) Franc, canon of Lausanne, between 1440 and 1442, and which was published first at a time and place unknown (1), then republished at Paris in 1530 just in time to play an important part in the new *Querelle des femmes*. As its subtitle indicates, this book contains the defense of women against all those who slander them and gives also the victories of the sex (*Contenant la defense des dames contre Malbouche et ses consors et victoires d'icelles*) (2). Each side has its combatant in the struggle, *Franc Vouloir* for women, and *Malebouche*, with his aide *Vilain Penser*, against them.

Vilain Penser begins the battle by maligning women in general and takes Eve as the first example (3). To him *Franc Vouloir* replies that Eve was a chef d'œuvre; proof of this assertion being found in the fact that she was the final and most perfect creation of God.

« Franc vouloir respond... et, monstre comment dieu
crea Eve comme chief d'œuure, et a pu fournir la
beaulté et ioye de ce mōde.

« Ainsi fut femme œuuvre darraine
Pource tout le monde contint

(1) Cf. BRUNET, *Manuel du libraire*, 6 vols., & supplement, Paris, 1860-65, 1878-80, II, p. 1367.

(2) FRANC, M., *Le Champion des dames*, Paris, 1530.

(3) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

Comme parfaicte et souueraine
 Car autant que l'homme en retint
 Et par d'homme luy atint
 Car faicte en fut, ce n'est merueille
 Se le createur coy se tint
 Quant il eut fait nompareille.
 Tout fut fait, tout fut accomply
 Perfaicte fut toute nature
 Le monde fut de ioye remply
 Quand il vit la belle facture. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 79, 79b, 80).

To this his adversary responds that God made woman in order that the Devil might use her as his tool. He says also that if she were the final creation of God, it was because she was made from the remains, just as a potter makes a sort of make-shift jar out of the clay that remains when his perfect pot has been completed. She is vile in comparison with man, and of little worth, and her contemptible character is plainly evident when she is compared with him.

« Laduersaire responce que Dieu la fist affin
 Que fust instrument au diable denfer.
 Quat ung potier voit son pot fait
 Du remanant ne scet que face
 Si non que souuent il en fait
 Ung marmoset destrange face.
 Ainsi dieu celle chiche face
 Fist de la demeurant rasure
 Quant il eust l'homme par sa grace
 Compose par bonne mesure
 On la fit, car quant vng contraire
 Est a son contraire oppose
 On peult mieulx la valeur retraire
 De cil qui est iuxte pose
 Or est il trestout suppose
 Que femme est noire et lhôme blanc
 Pource appert mieulx compose
 Vers elle qui ne vault vng blanc. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 87, 87b).

This adversary continues, saying that women's intelli-

gence is a very limited thing, that they are fitted to speak only of the simplest things, and should be subjected to the control of man just as if they were animals. If women were permitted to govern, they would revolutionize everything and tyrannize over men.

« A quel lieu, par quelque adventure
 Ont elles perdu que ne doivent
 Lire et parler de l'escripture
 Et es haulx affaires ne soient
 A peine osent-elles mot dire
 Les bonnes simples femmellettes
 Et leur engin ne laissent duire
 Fors a tresmenues chosettes
 Affin que comme bestelettes
 Dessoubz vostre main les tenez
 Certes elles sont trop simplettes
 Quant tellement les gouuernez.
 Mais vous qui bien apparceuez
 Que quant elles gouuernoient
 Les licences que vous avez
 A mal faire, elles pugniroient
 Et vos estats reformeroient
 Tant et tant les tenez subiectes
 Quelles loeil leuer noseroient
 Ne parler dauculns de vos gestes. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 100, 100b).

Franc Vouloir replies that God, who did all wisely, did not intend women to be subject to man, but rather that they should live together in harmony as companions with equal power.

« Mais avant ce tu dois entendre
 Que dieu qui fist tout saigement
 Voulut la femme faire et estendre
 Par ce demonstrant clerement
 En quelque facon nullement
 Que femme a l'homme ne seroit
 Mais bras a bras conioinctement
 La femme avec l'homme viuroit. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 100b).

His adversary will not accept any such statement, but declares that woman should be the servant of man, and act as housekeeper and cook, while the man goes out into the world. Moreover it is man's duty to correct her when she makes mistakes. He cites St. Augustine as an adherent of this opinion. Men and women are two distinct sexes, the first of which is always master, and the other servant. Their souls, however, show no difference, since the soul of each is made in the image of God. The differences between the two sexes are entirely physical, but they are so great that inevitably they pervert the understanding (1).

The defendant of women then proceeds to attack those husbands who are unfaithful to their marriage vows and who seek to justify such conduct, instead of refusing to be false to the bond that unites them to their wives. He asks these unfaithful husbands what cause they have to feel aggrieved or to complain if, when they are thus faithless, their wives retaliate by deceiving them. As far as he can see, such actions on the part of the husband justify similar conduct on the part of the wife (2).

« Que sil est marie pour tant
Dune ou daultre ne sabstiendra
Que il ne sen voise vantant
Quant sa femme ne l'entendra
A laquelle foy ne tiendra
Quant pourra il la fera coupe
Et en couraige maintiendra
Quen froissaut (*sic*) foy ne fera coulpe.
Que voy ie des maris
Quant ilz sont hors de la maison
Lors voit on qui est bon gallant
Qui aime fresche venoison
Qui mieulx scet trouuer achoison
De nouvellement bouhourder
Et de deslier la lieson
Qu'il doit a sa femme garder.

(1) Cf., *Ibid.*, pp. 101, 102.

(2) Such a justification of the wife's infidelity may perhaps be construed as a manifestation of the *esprit gaulois*, and not as any serious demand on the part of our author for a single standard of morality.

Lors dient ilz de beaulx proverbes.
 Ou lung dit en foy excusant
 Poulain aime nouvelles herbes
 Et laultre la femme accusant
 Trois fois la crye en son absence
 Delles se vont ainsi rusant
 Et nen font vlle conscience.

.
 Je demande au ribault mary
 Au faulx traître qui ne tient ferre
 De quoy il doit estre esmarry
 Se sa femme aussi se deslierre
 Veant quauuec aultre il se serre
 Et derriere luy fait la loupe
 A elle tort, non pas saint pierre
 Selle luy fait de tel pain soupe ».

(*Ibid.*, pp. 134*b*, 135, 135*b*).

Franc Vouloir maintains also that when woman has had an opportunity to govern, she has done it just as well as man, and has therefore an equal right to boast of her ability in that regard (1).

In conclusion, he speaks of those women of the past who have been highly esteemed and lauded, and mentions with especial praise Christine de Pisan, who had been commended not only by her compatriots, but also by writers of other lands, so that her glory and the fame of her works would endure forever (2).

It would be impossible to discuss the problem of feminism as treated in the first part of the sixteenth century without mentioning the part played by Erasmus. Although he was not French, his works were so widely translated, and his influence so profoundly felt, that a consideration of his views is indeed necessary. His opinion of women is not an altogether stable one ; on the contrary it offers several aspects, according as to whether he is considering her in family relationships, or as a being who should be educated for her responsibilities as a wife, mother and citizen.

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 250*b*.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 318*b*.

In *l'Eloge de la folie* (read in the translation of Guedeville, Leyden, 1713) his attitude towards women is not particularly favorable. Since man was created to administer and manage affairs, Jupiter desired to increase somewhat his portion of intelligence. He was advised to give him woman, a fool, and an impertinent person in truth, but who as a daily companion will, nevertheless, render her husband's lot happier (1).

Again in the *Colloquies* (*Familiarum Colloquiorum Formulae*, 1519) Erasmus returns to the question of women. He deals with it first in the colloquy entitled *The Lying-in Woman*. In this there is a dialogue between Fabilla and her visitor Eutrapelus, who plays the part of the assailant of the female sex. In reply to his arguments that man was created first and that woman was subjected to him, Fabilla replies that artists do not generally create their masterpieces as their first work, and that because man commands it does not necessarily follow that he is the better, but rather the person who is more greatly feared.

« *Fabilla*. — I believe you judge that a male is naturally more excellent and strong than a female ?

Eutrapelus. — I believe they are.

Fabilla. — That is Men's Opinion. But are Men any Thing longer-lived than women ? Are they free from distempers ?

Eutrapelus. — No, but in general they are stronger.. Besides, the male was created first.

Fabilla. — So was Adam before Christ. Artists used to be most exquisite in their later performances.

Eutrapelus. — But God put the woman under subjection to the man.

Fabilla. — It does not follow of consequence that he is the better because he commands, he subjects her as a wife and not purely as a woman ; and besides that he so puts the wife under subjection that though they have each of them power over the other, he will have the woman to be obedient to the man, not as to the more excellent, but to the more fierce person. »

(Erasmus, *Colloquies*, ed. of N. Bailey, 3 vols., London, 1900, vol. II, pp. 185, 186).

(1) Cf. ERASMUS, *L'Eloge de la folie*, Leyden, 1713, pp. 12, 43.

Furthermore, when God created man (i. e. the human race) in his own image, this image was expressed only in terms of man's intellectual equipment, wherefore men are not superior to women. To the statement of Eutrapelus that it is only men who fight for their country, Fabilla replies pertly that men are also deserters, and that more often instead of being animated by patriotism, it is the monetary reward which they expect to receive that incites them to warfare (1).

Another colloquy, much more entertaining, is the one entitled *The Abbot and the Learned Woman*. Antronius, the abbot, objects decidedly to the presence of so many books in Magdala's home, particularly since these books are in Greek and Latin. Woman should not seek to be wise, says he, but should make pleasure their sole business (2).

But Magdala is far from agreeing with the abbot. Her reply is that her pleasure is obtained from reading. Antronius continues his attack upon the *pédante* with the statement that a spinning-wheel should be a woman's weapon, whereupon Magdala replies that while it may be a woman's duty to care for her household and to instruct her children, such tasks demand a wisdom that can be secured only from books.

But Antronius refuses to be convinced, and again objects to the fact that the books are in Latin, a knowledge of which does nothing to make a woman more virtuous. Finally he declares that such bookish learning destroys what little brains a woman has. He would not have a learned wife, for a wise woman is twice a fool in his eyes.

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 186.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 114, 115. In a discussion of this colloquy a critic says : « C'est une opinion reçue qu'une femme sachant le latin est un phénomène. Luther opine absolument dans le même sens et abonde en détails curieux sur l'éducation féminine d'alors. Mais l'instruction telle qu'on la conçoit alors est bien plutôt l'érudition. L'idéal de ces novateurs, c'est la femme savante : celle qui sait le latin, le grec et même l'hébreu, celle qui discute sciences, philosophie, théologie, c'est une Marguerite de Navarre ».

(Krantz, E., « Les problèmes de la vie, et de l'éducation dans le théâtre de Molière », *Revue des cours et conférences*, VII, 1898, 99, pp. 693, 694).

Mag. — Suppose now that I take more Pleasure in reading a Good Author than you do in Hunting, Drinking, or Gaming, won't you think I live pleasantly ?

Ant. — I would not live that sort of Life.

Mag. — But why does this Household-stuff (books) displease you ?

Ant. — Because a Spinning-wheel is a woman's Weapon.

Mag. — Is it not a Woman's Business to mind the Affairs of her Family and to instruct her Children ?

Ant. — Yes, it is.

Mag. — And do you think so weighty an Office can be executed without Wisdom ?

Ant. — I believe not.

Mag. — This Wisdom I learn from Books.

Ant. — I could dispense with books ; but I can't bear Latin books.

Mag. — Why so ?

Ant. — Because it contributes nothing towards the Defence of their Chastity.

The common people are of my mind, because it is such a rare unusual thing for a Woman to understand Latin.

Mag. — Why then is it unbecoming in me to learn Latin, that I may be able daily to have Conversation with so many eloquent, learned and wise Authors and faithful Counsellors ?

Ant. — Books destroy women's Brains, who have little enough of themselves..... Bookishness makes folks mad..... By my Faith, I would not have a learned wife... I have often heard it said that a wise woman is twice a Fool.

Mag. —A woman that is truly wise does not think herself so : But on the contrary, one that knows nothing thinks herself to be wise, and that is being twice a Fool.

Ant. — I can't well tell how it is, that as Panniers don't become an Ox, so neither does Learning become a woman. »

(*Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 114-119).

In still another colloquy, *The Uneasy Wife*, there is a

dialogue between two women, Xantippe, who demands fair treatment from her husband, and Eulalie, who says that woman owes obedience to her husband, regardless of whatever treatment she may receive from him. Eulalie's argument receives its support from the New Testament, for she gives St. Paul's command to wives, and St. Peter's story of Sarah's respect for Abraham as reasons why a woman should acknowledge the authority of her husband (1).

« *Xantippe*. — I have heard those things, but the same Paul likewise teaches that men should love their wives as Christ loved his spouse the Church. Let him remember his duty and I'll remember mine.

Eulalie. — But nevertheless when things are come to that pass that one must submit to the other, it is but reasonable that the wife submit to her husband.

Eulalie. —It is the greatest glory of a matron to be obedient to her husband. This nature dictates, and it is the will of God, that the woman should wholly depend upon her husband. »

(*Ibid.*, I, pp. 259, 274).

Another, entitled *The Assembly or Parliament of Women*, portrays a group of women who have come together to imitate similar assemblies of men. This colloquy probably influenced Henri Estienne's work *de Senatu Feminarum*, in which the same idea finds expression, except that he limits it to married women who are also of noble birth, while Erasmus places no limitations upon those who are eligible to sit in his Parliament (2).

In the work entitled *De matrimonio christiano*, which was published in a collection of fifteen volumes at Leyden, 1641-52, Erasmus returns to the question of women and their relations with their husbands (3). Here he shows more sympathy for the wife than is manifested by Eulalie in the colloquy previously discussed (*The Uneasy Wife*). While he says that the husband should have authority in the household, he does not believe that the wife should be

(1) Cf. *op. cit.*, I, 259.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, vol. III, pp. 114-123.

(3) First edition, 1526.

reduced to the role of a virtual servant. On the contrary, such authority should be shared between husband and wife, and the former should be happy to divide it thus (1).

I. — « The husband should manage so that he always maintains his authority over his wife, but without making it felt too strongly. He should show her kindness and not cruelty.

In marriage woman is not so inferior to man that she ought not share his authority. Husbands act ill when they make servants of their wives. Those act no less ill who, through their own fault, allow their wives to usurp complete authority... It is tyranny for a husband to reduce a wife to the status of a servant, but it is folly for him to subject himself to her authority. There are those women who endure unwillingly the control that their husbands have over them, and who complain that instead of becoming wives they have become slaves upon entering into matrimony. These women would not complain thus if they believed seriously that the husband's happiness should be shared with the wife ».

II. — When one is wealthy enough not to have to work, it is very profitable to educate one's daughter in Greek and Latin. But if, because of lack of means, she is obliged to engage in manual labor, she should be taught to read her own language, for much wisdom may be obtained from reading good books.

However, girls should not apply themselves to the reading of fables and useless stories ; their husbands should see to it that they read suitable things, and should supervise their reading until they have formed good reading habits. Moreover, an interest in books should not hinder women from giving diligent heed to the sermons preached in the church ; rather should she be able to listen to them more profitably.

III. — The ignorant mob imagines that it is not fitting for girls to be instructed in *belles lettres* ; but experience has proved to the wise that there is nothing more useful in the formation of the mind, nor more likely to conserve the virtue of a young girl.

(1) An English translation is given here of the long passage quoted from the French translation of the *De matrimonio christiano*. The author was unable to get access to an English version.

- IV. — Canon law permits a husband to drive his wife out of his home if she be guilty of adultery ; and the wife would have the same privilege, if husbands did not tyrannically monopolize it. An adulterous husband has no right to a separation from an adulterous wife whom he has taught to be unfaithful.
- V. — As woman was the first to become an example as a sinner to her husband, and as she thereby made him mortal, she has been required to follow him and to be subject to him in order to atone for the evil she did to the human race in rendering it subject to death. Wives should have no difficulty in obeying the law established by God as binding upon all women.
- VI. — The husband is lord over his wife, because woman originated from man.
- VII. — She should know all feminine occupations such as spinning and weaving wool and flax, sewing, and managing a household. The girl who has learned housekeeping and other domestic duties in her father's home, has learned an art not to be despised, and one which will help her to avoid the dangers that beset idleness. Idleness is dangerous for everyone, but especially for young people and women. A young girl whose mind is unoccupied is always in danger. The best protection is work. Manual labor, which is both useful and necessary, does not keep a young girl from hearing and replying to the flattering propositions made by young men. Study occupies the entire mind. It is not only a means of defense against idleness, but also a means of inculcating good precepts in a girl's mind and of making her virtuous. Many people distrust an educated woman, offering the pretext that her natural wickedness has no need of being re-enforced by a knowledge that is dangerous in men of bad character.

(Erasmus, *Le Mariage chrétien*, trans. Cl. Bosc., d'après Guedeville, Paris, 1714, pp. 214, 218).

In discussing the subject of the education of girls, Erasmus makes a clear distinction between the type of education to be given to a girl from a wealthy family and to a girl obliged to work. The first, he says, should be educated in Latin and Greek, while the second should be taught

how to read her own language, since much is to be gained from reading. This reading must not be confined to the perusal of novels ; rather the girls should be trained to read worthwhile things. Erasmus uttered, however, a distinct warning : they must never be permitted to let their studies interfere with their religious duties. This warning shows the important part that religion was supposed to occupy in the training of a young girl (1).

« Lorsqu'on a assez de bien pour se passer de travail, il est très utile de former une jeune fille dans les belles lettres grecques et latines. Que si par la médiocrité des biens on est obligé d'avoir recours à lire ce qui est écrit en sa langue ; car on acquiert beaucoup de sagesse par la lecture des bons livres.

Mais il ne faut pas que les filles s'appliquent à lire des fables et des contes inutiles ; il faut que leurs maris les accoutument à de bonnes lectures, et qu'ils n'abandonnent ce soin que lorsqu'elles seront assez fortes pour s'en passer ; ce qui ne doit pas néanmoins porter une femme à négliger les exhortations qui se font dans l'Eglise ; mais plutôt à les entendre avec plus d'utilité. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 234, 235).

When speaking again on this same subject, he replies to the statements of those whom he deems ignorant because they claim that it is not fitting for girls to be educated in *les belles lettres*, saying that experience has taught the truly wise that nothing can aid more in the formation of the intelligence, nor be more useful in preserving the modesty of a young girl than education, since it enables her to occupy her leisure, and to distinguish between good and evil.

« Le vulgaire ignorant s'imagine qu'il ne convient pas aux filles d'être instruites aux belles lettres ; l'expérience fait connoître à ceux qui sont sages, que rien ne forme mieux l'esprit, et n'est plus utile pour la conservation de la pudeur. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 357, 358).

(1) Cf. CHRISTINE DE PISAN, *Livre des trois vertus*.

According to the canon law, says Erasmus, a husband was permitted to close his door to a wife guilty of adultery. He does not criticise this law, but he feels that such a privilege should belong likewise to the wife, if justice is to be done. However, a husband guilty of adultery has no right to banish his wife who is guilty of the same sin, since it is probably his example that has caused her to fall. Again it would seem as if we had found an author who demands a single standard of morality for the sexes.

« Les Loix Canoniques permettent à un mari de chasser sa femme de sa maison, si elle a commis un adultère ; et la femme auroit le même droit, si les maris n'usoient pas en cela d'une espèce de tyrannie. Un mari adultère n'a pas droit de se séparer d'une femme adultère, à qui il a appris lui-même l'impudicité. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 279).

When Erasmus returns later to the problem of the authority of the husband over his wife, he looks at it from a slightly different angle than that cited above. This time he seeks justification for the subjection of the wife, and finds it in the fact that it was woman who led man into sin, and therefore made him amenable to the penalty of death. The subjection of woman to man is God's attempt at reparation to man for the suffering resulting from punishment inflicted upon him for this original sin.

« Comme la femme a été la première à donner à son mari l'exemple de pécher et qu'elle l'a attiré et conduit à la mort ; on lui ordonne de le suivre et de lui être soumise, pour réparer le mal qu'elle a fait au genre humain, en le rendant sujet à la mort. Les femmes ne doivent pas avoir de peine à se soumettre à la loi que Dieu a prescrite à toutes les femmes. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 295).

Erasmus goes even further and tells us that when the wife obeys her husband she is subject not to him, but to God whom he represents. Therefore, even if it should happen that the husband does not deserve to be obeyed,

the wife should not object, since she is really obeying God, and she will be rewarded by Him for her virtuous obedience. As a last justification of the authority of the husband, Erasmus says that it is because woman originated from man. Throughout this last discussion, Erasmus has confined himself to what might be called theological arguments.

« Le mari est le chef de la femme, parce qu'elle tire son origine de l'homme. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 296).

In another of his works, *De pueris ad virtutem ac litteras liberaliter instituendis idque protinus a navitate Declamatio*, 1529, Erasmus takes up once more the question of the education that a woman should receive. She should learn how to perform the various tasks of the household, but that alone is insufficient, for to toil of the hands must be joined to toil of the mind. Instruction is, in his opinion, the surest guarantee of morality and happiness (1). As soon as a young girl's mind is unoccupied she falls into mischief. People are foolish who say that a woman has no need being educated because it serves only to emphasize the defects of her character. This same criticism, says he, could apply to a man of evil nature upon whom education would have the same effect.

« Elle doit savoir les ouvrages féminins, c'est-à-dire filer la laine et le lin, tisser, coudre, diriger le ménage et la maison. La jeune fille qui a appris dans la maison paternelle le gouvernement des choses domestiques, a appris un art qui n'est pas méprisable, et propre à éviter les dangers de l'oisiveté. L'oisiveté, pernicieuse à tout le monde, l'est surtout aux jeunes gens et aux femmes. Si l'esprit d'une fille est inoccupé, il tombe immédiatement dans le travers... Le meilleur préservatif, c'est l'étude. Le travail des mains, utile et nécessaire, n'empêche pas d'entendre les propos flatteurs des jeunes gens et d'y répondre. L'étude occupe l'âme tout entière... C'est non seulement une arme contre l'oisiveté, mais un moyen de faire péné-

(1) Cf. CHRISTINE DE PISAN, and ERASMUS, *De matrimonio Christiano*.

trer dans l'esprit d'une fille, les meilleurs préceptes et de la former à la vertu. Bien des gens sont de défiance de la femme instruite, sous prétexte que sa malice naturelle n'a pas besoin d'être renforcée par un savoir dangereux chez les hommes d'un mauvais naturel. »

(ERASMUS, *De pueris*, pp. 562, 563 cited in Rousselot, *L'histoire de l'éducation des femmes*, 2 vols., Paris, 1883, I, pp. 151, 153).

Those who would deny a girl education, desire that she should know what is evil and not what is good. If you refuse to train her so that she will be able to defend herself against temptation, then you should bury her in the country and make a virtual animal of her. History proves by many examples that almost all the vices of women result from their ignorance (1).

Thus an examination of Erasmus' works shows that he is on the whole favorable to women. His ideas may be summarized as follows :

1° He felt that the husband was in most cases the proper person to be head of the household, but the woman is not, therefore, to be reduced to the rank of a servant.

2° That women are often equal to men in courage, intelligence and general worth.

3° That women have a perfect right to the same type of education as men ; that Latin, for example, would do them no harm ; and that an educated woman was more fit to care for her household duties and rear her children than one who was ignorant of all save the purely domestic arts. She would also be fortified against those vices which might corrupt and ruin her.

4° In considering the problem of the education of a girl, Erasmus distinguishes between the type of learning suitable for a girl who must work, and that best adapted to a girl of noble birth. He thus avoids going so far as to advise the same education for all classes of women, which would have undoubtedly brought him much unfavorable criticism and caused him to be considered far too radical.

(1) Cf., ROUSSELOT, pp. 152, 153.

5° He defends the wife whose husband is unfaithful, and attacks the double standard of morality.

Erasmus, therefore, represents a decided advance in his thinking over the majority of his contemporaries. He is much more modern, and while not a radical from our point of view, many of his theories with regard to the education of women marked him as decidedly such at the period.

In Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* (1511) which was early translated into French, a similar emphasis is placed upon the fact that women should receive a certain amount of education and should always be kept occupied. Woman, in *Utopia*, was taught the lighter and easier crafts, such as spinning and weaving, and all of her leisure hours were spent in the acquisition of learning. Everything was taught her in her own language. She concerned herself with such subjects as astronomy and what More calls natural and moral philosophy (1).

Women in the *Utopia* were also trained in warfare, since they might at any time be called upon to defend their country. They were to be called upon only in case their land was menaced by invaders, or to help release an oppressed people from bondage. (Cf. Plato's, *Republic*, V) (2).

They might also become priestesses, although the widows and older women were the only ones chosen. In the religious services men and women occupied separate parts of the church (3).

The *Utopia*, it is evident, offers several points for those who were writing as advocates of women, for it portrayed a land where women were highly respected, where they were educated, and where in some cases they occupied the same type of position as that held by men. Erasmus may well have been influenced by Sir Thomas More's work, since its author was well known to him.

One of the most important of the authors of the early

(1) Cf. MORE, Sir THOMAS, *Utopia*, tr. R. Robinson, 1556 (*English Reprints*, London, 1869, pp. 82, 104, 105).

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

(3) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 151, 154.

sixteenth century for the subject under discussion was another man not of French birth, Henry Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim who was born at Cologne in 1486 and who died in 1535. He was a man who was far from being as modern in his ideas as Erasmus. Most of his works are philosophical or scientific in character, but in 1529 he published the very interesting treatise *De nobilitate et præcellentia femineï sexus declamatio*. This was written in honor of Marguerite of Austria, sister of Charles V, to whom Agrippa dedicates it.

Agrippa begins with the statement that there is no difference between man's and woman's soul ; that the only differences existing between the sexes are physical ones, but that the soul has no sex. The differences of the body will have no effect upon their final lot, for they were created for the same purpose.

« Toute la différence qui se trouve entre l'homme et la femme est seulement du côté du corps... Tout le reste est semblable ; l'âme de la femme n'est point d'un sexe différent de celle qui anime l'homme. Tous les deux ont reçu une âme absolument semblable et d'égale condition.

L'esprit, la raison, l'usage de la parole, sont les dons qui ont été donnés à la femme également comme à l'homme. La femme et l'homme ont été faits pour une même fin ; et la différence du sexe ne rendra pas leur sort différent. »

(Agrippa, H. C., *De la grandeur et de l'excellence des femmes au-dessus des hommes*, Paris, 1713 (name of translator not given), pp. 2, 3).

But Agrippa is not satisfied with such assertions : his purpose is to prove that woman is superior to man. He says that he will use as proofs of his statements the testimony of well-known authors, the facts of history, the authority of the Holy Scriptures, and the decisions of civil and canon law (1).

He begins to prove woman's greater excellence by using the methods of cabalistic philosophy, to which school he

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

himself belonged, and he proceeds to discuss the value of words and to assign to them a certain mysterious significance by virtue of the letters composing them. *Eve* signifies *Life* and *Adam*, *Earth* ; therefore, since *Life* is more noble than *Earth*, woman is superior to man. Also the name *Eve* resembles the name of God, while the name of *Adam* has no relationship with it. This again proves woman's superior worth.

« Eve signifie : *Vie*, Adam : *Terre*. Autant donc que la vie est plus excellente que la terre ; autant la femme doit-elle être regardée comme plus noble et plus parfaite que l'homme. Selon les caractères mystérieux dont se servent les Cabalistes, le nom de la première femme a beaucoup plus de rapport avec le nom ineffable de Dieu, qui s'écrit avec quatre lettres ; que le nom du premier homme, lequel n'a aucune ressemblance avec celui de l'Eternel, ni du côté des caractères avec lesquels on l'écrit, ni dans leur figure, ni dans leur nombre. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 10).

Woman is superior also because she is the last and most perfect work of God. All things destined for a mortal life only were formed of the elements, in an order ascending from the most to the least ignoble ; but man and woman were formed in the image of God. Certainly God, himself omnipotent, would not have finished his universe by the creation of anything but a perfect thing which would offer worthy proof of his power.

« Dieu a formé des éléments tous les corps qui sont sujets à la corruption ; en commençant par les plus vils et continuant toujours par degrés des moins parfaits aux plus parfaits... Dieu a fini tout son ouvrage par la création de l'homme et de la femme qu'il a faits à son image et ressemblance. Il a d'abord fait l'homme ; ensuite la femme comme étant le chef-d'œuvre et la perfection de tout son ouvrage et son plus magnifique ornement.

Le Créateur semble avoir renfermé et employé toute sa puissance et sa sagesse pour faire la femme. Elle est la dernière créature qui soit sortie de ses mains... Sans elle en effet, l'Univers qui ne peut avoir toute

sa perfection et comme avoir reçu sa dernière main, que par la création de la créature la plus parfaite qu'il puisse y avoir ; n'auroit pas tout ce qu'il falloit qu'il eût pour être entièrement parfait et achevé. Car on ne peut pas raisonnablement penser que Dieu eût fini un ouvrage aussi parfait qu'est l'Univers par quelque chose d'imparfait. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 13, 14, 15).

Women's superiority is due also to the fact that she was created in Paradise (as were the Angels), while man, like the other animals, was created outside. He was created of vile, inanimate dust ; she of matter already purified and living, and part of a body united at that time to a soul which was divine in nature. Man is a product of nature ; woman was created only by the power of God (1).

« L'homme... a été paîtri d'une vile cendre inanimée. Mais la femme a été formée d'une matière déjà purifiée, animée, vivifiée laquelle matière faisoit partie d'un corps, qui était uni à une âme, dont la nature est Divine.

D'ailleurs, Dieu avait fait l'homme d'une terre qui par nature, et la seule coopération des influences célestes, avoit quelque proportion à être la mere de tous les animaux. La Femme au contraire a été créée par la seule vertu de Dieu... L'homme est donc l'ouvrage de la nature, et la femme celui de Dieu.

L'Ecriture établit puissamment bien la grandeur et la noblesse de la femme au-dessus de l'homme par la différence des lieux où ils ont été créés. La femme en effet a été formée comme les anges, dans le Paradis terrestre ; qui étoit un lieu aussi illustre qu'agréable. L'homme au contraire a été créé comme tous les animaux, hors du Paradis dans un lieu champêtre. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 17, 18, 20, 21).

Woman has become man's source of happiness. Solomon calls her the crown of her husband, and St. Paul his glory. Such terms could be applied only to

(1) Cf. Christine de Pisan.

a perfect creature ; indeed St. Augustine speaks of woman's society as the most perfect that man can enjoy in this mortal life (1).

In his efforts to prove woman's higher excellence, Agrippa next tries to say that she was less guilty than man of the original sin in the Garden of Eden, since she sinned through ignorance ; whereas man's was deliberate. Therefore, when Christ wished to assume human nature in its lowest form in order to atone by his humiliation for the first sin, he chose the body of man, so that the sin might be expiated by the sex that had committed it. Also God chose a woman to be the mother of Christ because she was less guilty, having sinned through ignorance, and was therefore worthy to give birth to the Redeemer from original sin.

« C'est pourquoi Jésus-Christ ayant voulu prendre la nature humaine dans l'état le plus vil et le plus abject, afin d'expier par son humiliation l'orgueil du péché du premier homme : il a choisi le sexe masculin, comme étant le plus méprisable et non le féminin qui est plus noble et plus relevé que le masculin. De plus le genre humain, étant devenu criminel, plus par le péché de l'homme que par celui de la femme ; Dieu a voulu que le péché fut expié dans le sexe qui avoit commis le péché ; et que du sexe qui avoit été surpris et trompé sans le scavoir, sortit celui sur qui le péché devoit être vengé. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 57).

This same point had already been made by Christine de Pisan, who says that woman accepted as true what the serpent said, and so sinned through simplicity of mind and ignorance. Eve could not be said to have deceived her husband, since deceit implies the desire to deceive, and her simplicity rendered malice impossible to her.

...mais du decevement,
Dont on blasme dame Eve nostre mere,

(1) Cf. *Ibid.* pp. 52, 53.

Dont s'ensuivi de Dieu sentence amere,
 Je dî pour vray qu'oncq Adam ne deçut
 Et simplement de l'anemi conçu
 La parole qu'il lui donna a croire,
 Si la cuida estre loial et voire,
 En celle foy de lui dire s'avance ;
 Si ne fu donc fraude ne decepvance,
 Car simplece, sanz malice celée,
 Ne doit estre decepvance appellée.
 Nul ne deçoit sanz cuidier decepvoir,
 Ou aultrement decepvance n'est voir. »

(Christine de Pisan, *L'Epistre au dieu d'amours*, p. 20).

Agrippa then proves the excellence of woman by using one of Aristotle's principles, — namely that that class, the best representative of which is superior to the best of another class, is itself superior to that second class. By this argument he proves that the Virgin, the highest among women, is superior to John the Baptist, highest among men, and that therefore woman is of greater worth than man. This argument can apply equally well, says he, to the most wicked and contemptible, and certainly the most contemptible of all creatures is man. Further proof that the female sex is superior to the male is found in the fact that in the Bible several men are found condemned to eternal damnation, while this punishment is nowhere assigned to any women.

...« Le genre dans lequel ce qui s'y rencontre de meilleur est plus noble que ce qu'il y a de meilleur dans un autre genre ; que ce premier genre, dis-je, est plus noble que l'autre genre. Or la sainte Vierge est ce qu'il y a de meilleur dans le genre des femmes ; saint Jean Batiste est ce qu'il y a de meilleur dans le genre des hommes. Mais la Vierge est au-dessus saint Jean. On peut encore raisonner ainsi ; le genre dans lequel ce qu'il y a de plus vil dans un autre genre, ce premier genre est moins noble que l'autre. La plus mauvaise et la plus vicieuse des toutes les créatures est l'homme... Et de plus nous trouvons dans la sainte Ecriture les noms de plusieurs hommes condamnez aux supplices éternels ; mais il n'y est point fait mention d'aucunes femmes damnées. »

(Agrippa, *op. cit.*, pp. 72, 73).

Women have invented all the liberal arts and are the source of all virtue, and for these reasons the names of sciences and virtues are all feminine. This gives the sex additional worth and dignity (1).

Men who are opposed to women may say that men have accomplished many famous and noble deeds. But if they have done anything great or illustrious, there have always been women who have done equally well. In fact, if it were not contrary to the general custom for women to apply themselves to the *belles lettres*, there would be a large number of women even more distinguished than men (2).

Agrippa next states that a woman suspected of having been seduced is, under penalty of the law, either put into a convent, or given over to the custody of others of her sex who are charged with keeping her under constant surveillance. He says this is because woman is better than man, whose conduct in such a case is looked upon as more reprehensible than hers.

« Si une femme est soupçonnée d'avoir fait quelque faute, la Loi ordonne qu'on la mette dans un Couvent, ou qu'on laisse à des femmes le soin de la faire enfermer ; la raison de cela est comme insinue la Loi, que la femme est meilleure que l'homme, parce que pour une même faute il est beaucoup plus reprehensible qu'elle. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 114).

It is stated elsewhere (3) that according to the *Etablissements de St. Louis*, every young girl who had been seduced was condemned to lose all of her possessions and to pass the rest of her life in prison or in a cloistered convent. Her seducer should undergo the same penalty, except for the confiscation of his property. In the first place, the reference given by Miss Laigle (*Etablissements*, vol. III, p. 24, article 15) is incorrect, for it is to be found in volume II, article 14. But far more serious than this is her error in stating the law, which reads as follows :

(1) Cf., *Ibid.*, p. 83.

(2) C., *Ibid.*, pp. 90, 91.

(3) LAIGLE, M., *Le Livre des trois vertus de Christine de Pisan*, p. 140.

« Gentis fame quant ele a anfanz ainz qu'ele soit mariée, ou si ele se faisoit despucler, ele pert son heritage par droit quant ele en est provée. »

(Viollet, Paul, ed., *Les Etablissements de Saint-Louis*, 4 vols., Paris, 1881, vol. II, p. 24, article 14).

It certainly is evident that the law here is concerned only with girls of noble birth, nothing is said about imprisonment or claustration, and the man's punishment is not mentioned at all.

Further investigation of the question to see if either of these authors has any grounds for his statement reveals the fact that according to the code of Justinian (*Novelle* 134, ch. 10) the adulterous woman was condemned to be whipped and shut up in a convent. Old French law inflicted the same punishment with this modification, — a woman convicted of infidelity was put in a convent where within two years her husband might come and pardon her. At the end of this probationary period, if she had not been pardoned her head was shaved, she was given the veil, and was cloistered for life. Adultery of the husband was punished also, but in such a case the judges had full choice as to the type or severity of the punishment (1).

Another example of the type of punishment meted out to the adulterous woman is to be found in the *Orlando furioso* of Ariosto. The passage recalls that already referred to in the work of Christine of Pisa. The king's daughter is condemned to death at the stake by the *aspra legge di Scozia, empia e severa* because she has been found guilty of adultery. Rinaldo is asked to defend her, for there are those who consider her innocent. She can be saved from her fate only on condition that some valiant warrior prove her innocence by being victor in a combat with her accuser.

« Nè riparar si può ch'ella non pera,
Quando per lei non venga un guerrier forte
Che tolga la difesa, e che sostegna
Che sia innocente e di morire indegna. »

(Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, 1532, (ed. Casella, Firenze, 1905, IV, p. 72).

(1) Cf. *La Grande encyclopédie*, I, *Adultere*, G. Paturet.

To this plea Rinaldo replies not only with a promise to defend Ginevra, and to save her from her impending fate, but also with an eloquent defense of the right of a woman to have a lover. Laws are unjust, says he, which punish one sex for something that the other sex is allowed to do with impunity. If it is wrong for the woman, it is equally wrong for the man, and the same punishment should be meted out to him. If that is not the case, then the woman has as much right to have a lover as the man to have a mistress. She is entitled also to receive equal treatment before the law. Rinaldo's speech won universal favor, and it was agreed by all that the ancients were unwise to have passed such a law, and that the king who could correct it, and refused to do so, was not doing his duty.

« Pensò Rinaldo alquanto, e poi rispose ;
 Una donzella dunque dè morire
 Perchè lasciò sfogar ne l'amorose
 Sue braccia al suo amator tanto desire ?
 Sia maladetta chi tal legge pose,
 E maladetto chi la può patire.
 Debitamente muore una crudele.
 Non chi dà vita al suo amator fedele.

.
 E dirò che fu inguisto o che fu matto
 Chi fece prima gli statuti rei ;
 E come iniqui rivocar si denno,
 E nuova legge far con miglior senno.
 S'un medesimo ardor, s'un disir pare
 Inchina e sforza l'uno e l'altro sesso
 A quel soave fin d'amor, che pare
 All'ignorante vulgo un grave eccesso ;
 Perchè si de' punir donna o biasmare,
 Che con uno o più d'uno abbia commesso
 Quel che l'uom fa con quante n'ha appetito,
 E lodato ne va, non che impunito ?
 Son fatti in questa legge disuguale
 Veramente alle donne espressi torti ;
 E spero in Dio mostrar ch'egli è gran male
 Che tanto lungamente si comporti.
 Rinaldo ebbe il consenso universale
 Che fur gli antiqui ingiusti male accorti

Che consentiro a così iniqua legge,
E mal fa il re, che può nè la corregge. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 73, 74).

The source of this *aspra legge* is, according to Pio Rajna, to be found in the *Tristan* (prose version). There the king Apollo suspected his wife of infidelity (but wrongly), and wished to rid himself of her. It happened that a girl was brought before the king who was accused of having had intercourse with one of the nobles of the court. He asked his wife what punishment should be given her. Upon her reply that she deserved death at the stake, the king ordered that she be burned, and declared that anyone else convicted of the same crime would receive the same punishment, were it the queen herself. The law became thus established throughout Gaul and Britany, and was still prevalent at the time of Arthur (1).

Rajna continues, saying that a similar situation is to be found in the *Merlin* (prose version) which antedated the *Tristan*.

« Et en icel tans estoit costume que femme qui estoit
reprinse en adultere, s'ele ne s'abandonnoit a tous
hommes plainierement, c'on enferoit justice. »

(Rajna, p. 155).

He finds another (and even closer source, since the story is that of a girl, rather than of a married woman) in the first chapter of the *Amadis de Gaule*.

« En aquella sazón era por ley establecido que qual-
quiera mujer, por de estado grande é senoris que fuese,
si en adulteris se hallaba, no se podia en ninguna
guisa excusar la muerte ; y esta tan cruel costumbre
é pésima duró hasta la venida del muy virtuoso rey
Artur. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 155).

It is evident from these citations that the punishment of the unfaithful woman was a theme that had been

(1) Cf. RAJNA, PIO, *Le Fonti dell' « Orlando furioso »*, Firenze, 1900, p. 154.

treated by other authors before Agrippa, and that he offers nothing new.

Agrippa now has recourse to history to prove the worth of woman. He declares that Lycurgus and Plato had such faith in her strength and intelligence that they prescribed for her the same training as for men, — physical exercise and instruction in the science of war, such as placing a camp, arranging an army in line of battle, and conducting it in combat.

« Nous voïons encore que Licurgue et Platon... convaincus par les lumières de la Philosophie, que les femmes ne sont pas moindre que les hommes, par l'excellence de leur esprit, la force de leur corps et la dignité de leur nature... nous voïons ces hommes... ordonner que les femmes s'exercassent également comme les hommes, à la lutte et aux autres exercices du corps, qu'elles apprissent la discipline de la guerre... à disposer un camp, à ranger une armée en bataille, à la conduire. En un mot, ils vouloient que tous les exercices des hommes fussent communs aux femmes. »

(Agrippa, *op cit.*, pp. 114, 115)

Although Agrippa was forced to admit that the women of his day occupied a decidedly subordinate position, he saw in this subjection, not a proof of the incapacity of the entire sex, but rather the fact that it was due to the usurpation of her natural rights, by man. He criticises severely the prevalent state of affairs ; namely that as soon as a girl child is born she is shut up in the house, given nothing serious or worth-while to do, as if she were considered incapable of such things, and forced to make the needle and thread her sole occupation. According to existing laws she was refused admission to any public office, and regardless of her intelligence she was not permitted to appear as a lawyer. Likewise she was refused permission to preach, although in the book of Joel we read " your daughters shall prophesy ", and in the age of the apostles they taught publicly. But unjust legislators, says Agrippa, have refused to recog-

nize the rights of women and so they live degraded and suppressed.

« En effet à peine une fille est-elle née, on la tient renfermée dans la maison, sans l'occuper à rien de solide ou de sérieux et comme si elle n'étoit pas capable de plus grandes choses on veut qu'elle fasse son unique occupation de son fil et de son éguille...

Les loix l'éloignent de toutes les charges publiques. Quelque esprit qu'elle ait, on ne lui permet point de parler dans le Barreau, on ne lui accorde aucune juridiction, aucun droit d'arbitre...

On interdit la prédication aux femmes quoique l'Ecriture dise dans Joel, « vos filles prophétiseront » ; et que du temps des Apôtres elles enseignassent publiquement.

Mais les derniers Législateurs ont été bien différens des premiers ; ils ont regardé les femmes comme beaucoup au-dessous des hommes. Ce ne sont point les loix de la nature, ni du Créateur ; ni encore moins la raison qui les y obligent ; mais une malheureuse coutume, une fatale éducation, leur sort malheureux et un hazard injuste les y engagent. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 118, 119, 120).

Agrippa may well be called an ardent feminist, for he not only defends the sex against its maligners, but he goes much further and demands for it political privileges comparable to those sought by the feminists of our own day. He offers an interesting contrast, for alongside of these demands which are radical and modern is to be found a purely mediaeval theology upon which he bases many of his arguments favorable to women.

In 1534 appeared *La Louange du mariage et des femmes vertueuses* by Pierre de le Monnier de Lesnauderie. It has no particular importance for this study except that it gives an appreciation, as of one among other *femmes vertueuses*, of Christine de Pisan who is spoken of as very expert in rhetoric and author of several treatises. Among these our author mentions particularly *la Cité des dames* in which are memorialized many virtuous and famous

women, and which should be studied by all women in view of the fact that a woman composed it (1).

Another highly important book for the *querelle des femmes*, and one which called forth much criticism pro and con, was written by Gratian du Pont, sieur de Drusac. It appeared in 1534 at Toulouse, under the title of *Controverses dex sexes masculin et femenin*. The book is virulent in its attack upon women ; indeed few satires of this period were as bitter or as cruel. A counselor of the king of Navarre at Toulouse testifies to the worth of the *Controverses* : they are beneficial, says he, in helping us to escape the deceptive snares of women, and even if some enraged lovers fight for them, Gratian du Pont will quell the envious barking of these furious mastiffs, and at the same time will defeat all irritated ladies (2).

The work of Gratian du Pont also called forth a poem from Germain Colin Boucher, who says that Drusac has said some good and much bad of women, — the good not of his own invention, and the evil the product of his mad brain. The bitterness of the book is due, says the poet, to unrequited love, and Gratian du Pont himself grieves over a work so bestial that ink, paper, pen and words all give forth an unbearable odor.

« Drusac dit bien des femmes, et bien mal,
Le bien qu'il dit est pris en bonne escolle,
Dont il n'est pas l'inventeur principal
Et le bien mal vient de sa teste folle.
Après bon vin, comme on dit, bon cheval
Despit d'amour le mist en cette colle :
Pardonnez luy, de grace especial,
Car penitent et triste, il s'en desole,
Congnoissant bien son livre bestial
Dont l'ancre put, papier, plume et parole. »

(*Les poésies de Germain Colin Boucher, angevin, secrétaire du grant maître de Malle* (3).

(1) Cf. LESNAUDERIE, P. de, *La Louange du mariage et des femmes vertueuses*, Paris, 1534, p. 28.

(2) Cf. OULMONT, Ch., « Gratian du Pont, sieur de Drusac et les femmes », *Revue des études rabelaisiennes* (IV, 1906, pp. 1, 135), p. 3.

(3) Quoted in Oulmont, p. 5.

Gratian du Pont appeared as a protagonist in the *querelle des femmes* at the same time that Jean Bouchet was publishing his *Triomphes de la noble et amoureuse dame*, and four years after the republishing of Martin Franc's *le Champion des dames*. Pamphlets, articles, debates were appearing on all sides, and the questions of women, love and marriage were the object of almost universal interest. This writer had, as has been already hinted at by Boucher, a reason for his envenomed attack, for he had suffered because of women, and was seeking his revenge. It is highly probable that thoughts of his own personal affairs led him to exaggerate unconsciously his bitter statements (1).

At the beginning of the *Controverses* the poet is slumbering under the branches of a hawthorn when there appears before him an old man, pale and weeping. This is the male sex, enemy of the female, who addresses Drusac in words which are highly pleasing to the poet. He places himself under the banner of God and claims to be divinely inspired. Certainly God never desired woman to have any part in serving him (2), and none are numbered among those who serve before the throne of heaven.

« ...Dieu qui tort ne faict... mis en si grand mespris
 Sexe de femme, sans qu'il nen eusse pris
 Pour son seruice, en son throsne des cieux
 Ou il se tient, le bon Roy precieux
 Il y cogneut, quelque mauuais uenin
 Au pouure genre et sexe feminin. »

(Gratian du Pont, sieur de Drusac, *Controverses des sexes masculin et féminin*, Paris, 1536, p. 25b).

In heaven, likewise, there are no women angels. God, as the first examples of his creation, made the angels, and made them male only ; a proof of the fact, says Gratian du Pont, that the omnipotent God knew well what trouble women were to cause. If there had been female angels they would have fought either with those of the

(1) Cf. OULMONT, p. 8.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

opposite sex or among themselves, for each of them would have desired dominance over the others.

« Je diz que Dieu, avant creer le monde
 Ce ne sont point, pour vray dire choses estranges
 Pour le premier, voulut creer les anges
 Pour le servir, touchant la deite
 Et pour monstrier, sa grande dignite
 Mais en faisant, ces belles gentillesses
 Dieu ne crea, aucunes angelesses
 Quest a noter, car Dieu omnipotent
 En ce temps la, ie diz scauoit autant
 Qu'il scait cest heure, en toute faculte
 Aussi uiuant, nen fait difficulte.
 Il scauoit bien, ce que depuis sest faict
 Qui se fera et se met en effect.
 Son Paradis Angelesses eust eues
 Je tiens pour seur, que se fussent batues
 Avec les anges, par malices extremes
 Ou comme croy, plutost entre elles mesmes.
 Brief elles eussent, tout voulu dominer
 Estre maistresses, hault et bas gouuerner. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 23b, 24).

Women try to defend themselves and say that there are no women devils in hell, for woman's nature is too noble, gentle and humane for God to have made of her a tormentor of souls (1).

To this the poet replies that men have long known that all the suffering and unhappiness in the world have come through women. If there are no female devils, it is because these evil spirits were originally created angels and fell from heaven when they were punished by God for their arrogance. Since there were no female angels, there can be no female devils.

« Mais le contraire, nous hommes bien scauõs
 Comme trop mieulx, au long declairerons
 Car toute peine, tout malheur et diffame
 En cestuy monde, nous prouient de la femme.
 Bref Diablesses, en enfer il na point

1) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Car il faut croire, par raisons veritables
 Que les espritz, que lon nomme Diables
 Tous estoient Anges, de leur creation
 Iusques au point, de leur transgression
 Que Dieu voulut pugnir leur arrogance.
 Par quoy puis dire et faire consequence
 Puisque Angelesses, nauoit en leur manoir
 Que Diablesses, il ny pouoit auoir. »

(*Ibid.*, ff. 24 24b).

Not only is God unwilling to be served by women as angels in heaven, but he also will not have them as priestesses. Women cannot take orders, consecrate churches or administer the sacraments.

« Car tout ainsi, qu'il na voulu angelesses
 Semblablement, il na voulu prebstresses.
 Les sacrez ordres, femmes ne peuuent prêtre
 Si elles se ueulent, bien garder de mesprendre
 Femme ny a que puisse consacrer
 Benistre eglise, et moins encore sacrer
 Donner ne peuuent, aucun sainet sacrement
 Car deffendu, leur est expressement. »

(*Ibid.* p. 26).

He considers them absolutely unworthy to do any such acts, and believes that even the most ignoble man has more dignity and authority for such things than the most devout nun.

But even Gratian would be just enough to say that wise and virtuous women deserve praise. The only difficulty that he finds is that such women are rare and hard to find, so rare in fact that he arrives at last at the conclusion that all women are fools (1).

Gratian du Pont having first disparaged women by saying that they have no place in heaven, nor even in hell, and that they can hold no churchly office, turns next to proofs of the superiority of man over woman. He finds the main proofs to be three in number, — priority, form and material of creation. Man is superior, therefore, 1^o because he was created before woman ; 2^o because

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

he was created in the image of God, while she was not ; and 3^o because man was created from the soil from whence come good things, while woman was created from bone, a thing less noble and less necessary, since it serves only to hold the flesh together, and that flesh made from earth.

« Car a lymaige, et semblance fut faict
Lhomme iadis, du createur parfaict
Quant a la femme, elle nest si parfaicte
Car a lymaige, de Dieu point ne fut faicte
Lhōme fur faict du lymon de la terre

.
La femme point, car fut faicte de los
Qui nest si noble, ny tant digne de loz
...Plus noble est la chair que los nest
Plus necessaire, ie le diz franc et net
Los ne proufite, ie le ueulx soustenir
Fors seulement, que pour la chair tenir.
...Noter fault que la chair fut faicte
De la plus doulce, noble terre et parfaicte
Que Dieu trouua, quant fist l'homme iadis
Mais quant aux os, le contraire ie dis. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 67, 67b, 68b, 69b).

God would never have created woman except for the fact that he desired man to have a companion. He made her beautiful in order to please men, but he also designed that she should honor him as her lord and master (1).

But man is also superior to woman because God gave him authority over everything. Nowhere in the Bible can there be found an instance of a woman holding a position of importance, but rather all such posts are conferred upon man as a person of superior courage and endowments (2).

Furthermore, woman is the cause that man is no longer immortal, for she led man into sin through belief in her, and through his desire to please her. It is due solely

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 72b, 73.

to her, says the poet, that we are subject to eternal damnation.

« Bref point subiectz, ne fussions a la mort
Que pour la femme, aucun ne fusse mort,
Car est pour elles, q̄ trestous nous mourrôs
Et quen ce monde, si petit demourrons.
Trestous les maulx, q̄ nous auôs en somme
Sont pour la femme, car iadis pecher l'homme
Fit pour la croyre, dont fit tresfollement
Depuis subiectz, sommes a damnement.
Commencement, de peche fut bien elle
La malheureuse, pecheresse cruelle
Cuydant scauoir, autant que Dieu parfaict
Par quoy cōmettre, noulut ung tel forfait
Mais le bon homme, a ce point ne pensa
Pour autre chose, quant ledict offensa
Il ne le fit, que pour uoloir complaire
Las a sa femme et pour ne luy desplaie. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 83b, 84).

The poet then launches into a violent tirade against the whole sex, calling them malicious, contemptible, villainous, treacherous, perverse, boastful and fickle, and forever prejudicial to the best interests of men (1).

Finally Gratian du Pont proceeds to counsel those men who are desirous of marrying members of such a worthless sex. They should not marry too young a wife, for she would quickly prove false to him; not too old a one, for she would be jealous and soon torment her husband to death; nor a widow, for she would talk eternally of her first husband. She must be neither beautiful nor ugly, fat nor thin, white nor black, rich nor poor, learned nor simple (2): in short Gratian du Pont finally reaches the conclusion that a man who wishes to marry is hunting for trouble, and that if he will only avoid matrimony no ill will ever befall him (3).

Certainly the sex could scarcely find a more inveterate enemy, and it is hardly to be wondered at that Gratian

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 87b, 88.

(2) Cf. OULMONT, p. 14.

(3) Cf. GRATIAN DU PONT, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

du Pont's book aroused such a storm of comment, and caused many to come to the defense of women. At the same time it offered new arguments, as well as elaborations of those already employed, to those who wished to calumniate the sex, and to attack it still further.

But women were not to lack their champions, and among them is to be found the rhetorician (*rhétoricien*) of Poitou, Jean Bouchet. In *Le Jugement poëtic de l'honneur féminin et seiour des illustres et claires et honnestes dames*, published at Poitiers, 1538, there is an apology of the author addressed to Anne de la Tremoille which shows how vigorously he intends to protest against those men who seem all too ready to disparage women. He claims that each sex has its own reasons for being honored and respected. As for their souls, says Bouchet, both man and woman were created in the image of God, and therefore there will be no difference of sex in Paradise. Although man may be found to excel in some respects, women will also be found to excel him in others. Here Jean Bouchet makes use of a proof which we have already noted, and which is destined to reappear many times, — namely the material from which each was created, and the place of creation of each sex.

« Je proteste en premier lieu ne vouloir preferer l'honneur des femmes a celuy des hommes mais... garder a chacû son ordre et monstrier que le sexe femenin est a honnourer en son ordre et qualite comme le masculin... Parlant de l'ame de la femme, Dieu la faicte a sa semblance comme lame de l'homme : et ny aura difference de sexe en paradis.

Et si lon treuve que l'homme ait quelque excellence pardessus la femme, aussi a la femme pardessus l'homme. Car l'homme fut cree du lymon de la terre qui est chose vile et inanimee et la femme de la couste de l'homme... L'homme fut cree hors Paradis terrestre et la femme dedans ».

(Bouchet, J., *Le Jugement poëtic de l'honneur femenin et seiour des illustres et claires et honnestes dames*, Poitiers, 1538, *Apologie de l'auteur*).

But this is not the only work of Jean Bouchet in which

we find expression of his ideas upon women. He wrote several epistles. — *Aux pucelles et filles à marier*, *Aux meres de familles*, as well as *Le Panegyric du Chevallier sans reproche*, and *L'histoire et cronicque de Clotaire I et de sainte Radegonde*, in which he both gives his theories about the education of women, and shows the lofty conception that he has of the sanctity of marriage and of the purity of chivalric love (1).

To occupy her leisure hours the young girl is to sew, embroider, spin ; she may read, but she should not choose as her reading matter *vn tas de romans lasciuëux* (This shows the opinion generally held in the sixteenth and seventeenth century as to novels). A girl might even desire to compose works in prose or in verse, and in so doing she would follow the example of many illustrious women (2). A woman should not be a pedant, but she could certainly be well educated without becoming a *femme savante* (3). In marriage she should seek to please her husband ; also she should leave to her husband the command of the home.

Jean Bouchet has a theory concerning the education of women which will be found again in the writings of d'Aubigné. If one is to decide whether women should or should not be educated, says he, it is necessary first to examine their social rank. For a woman of the lower classes, who has to occupy herself with her household duties, learning is incompatible with her state, and therefore unnecessary. On the contrary, women of noble birth have no such duties with which to concern themselves, and so should apply themselves to books rather than to waste their leisure hours in frivolity. Questions of theology are not for them, however. Moreover, women thus educated are more valuable as mothers (4). As examples of those of the sex who have been educated and who have profited by it he cites women of classic

(1) Cf. HAMON, A., *Jean Bouchet, un grand rhétoricien poëvin*, Paris, 1901, pp. 295, 296.

(2) Cf. HAMON, pp. 297, 298.

(3) Cf. Ch. IV, p. 128.

(4) Cf. ERASMUS, ch. III, pp. 48, 49.

times, and also several Christians, — Paula and Proba, St. Catherine and St. Bridget.

« Aulcuns trouvoient estrange que ceste dame emploïast son esprit à composer livres, disant que ce n'estoit l'estat de son sexe. Mais ce légier jugement procède d'ignorance, car en parlant de telle manières, on doit distinguer les femmes, et sçavoir de quelles maisons sont venues, si elles sont riches ou pauvres. Je suis bien d'opinion que les femmes de bas estat, et qui sont contrainctes de vacquer aux choses familières et domestiques, ne doivent vacquer aux lettres, parce que c'est chose répugnante à rusticité ; mais les roynes princesses et aultres dames qui ne se doibvent, pour révérence de leur estat, appliquer à mesnages... et qui ont serviteurs et servantes pour ce faire, doivent trop mieulx appliquer leurs esprits, et emploier le temps à vacquer à bonnes et honnestes lettres, concernant choses morales qui induisent à vertus et bonnes mœurs, que à oysiveté mère de tous vices, ou à dances, convis et banquets ; mais se doibvent garder d'appliquer leurs esprits aux curieuses questions de théologie, dont le savoir appartient aux prélats, recteurs et docteurs. Et si, à ceste considération, est convenable aux femmes estre lettrées en lettres vulgaires, est encore plus requis pour un aultre bien qui en peult procéder. »

(Bouchet, J., *Le Panegyric du chevalier sans reproche*. Coll. Petitot, XIV, pp. 448-449, cited in Rousselot, P., *L'Histoire de l'éducation des femmes en France*, 2 vols., Paris, 1883, I, pp. 108-110).

In his epistle *Aux hommes et femmes mariez* he takes the point of view of Christine de Pisan that the men who are slandering women are themselves immoral, and have known only women of ill-fame (1). Neither sex should be the object of attack, for in criticising human beings one is blaspheming God, who created all in His wisdom and for His purposes.

« ...parce est tresbon qu'on cesse
De detracter de l'vn et l'autre sexe,

(1) Cf. BOUCHET, J., *Epistres morales et familiers du Traverseur*, Poitiers, 1545, p. 21b.

Ou aultrement se seroit diffamer
 L'oeuvre de Dieu, voire le blasphemer,
 Car il a faict tout en sa sapience,
 Et tout est bon, i'entends en son essence,
 Et pour la fin à laquelle est crée
 Sur cela soit nostre esprit recrée. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 23b).

He again returns to his previous idea that each sex has its particular task to accomplish (1), and repeats again that a woman's duty is to obey her husband.

« Ne permettōs qu'une femme soit hōme
 Né homme femme, a tous le diz en somme
 L'homme fera ce qui lui a affiert,
 La femme aussi, nostre estat le requiert.
 Il n'est pas beau qu'une femme commande
 A son mary, l'offense seroit grande. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 23b).

In the epistle *Aux pucelles et filles à marier*, he tells the young girl that if she spends her time in attending to her household she will always be looked upon with favor by her husband.

« Quād vous serez seules en vous maisons
 Filés, cousez ou brodez es saisons
 Qu'on le doit faire, ou faictes vng ouvrage
 Appartenant a l'estat de mesnage,
 Car celles la qui travaillent ainsi
 Treuvent mariz selon leur cueur sans si. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 28).

Jean Bouchet certainly may be classed among the feminists, but not among the radicals. In many respects he resembles Erasmus. Like Erasmus he feels that feminine education is to be determined by the social rank of the girl. In no place, however, does he advocate the type of ignorant girl preferred by Molière's Arnolphe.

Among the participants in the debate over women was

(1) Cf. CHRISTINE, ch. 1, p. 29.

one indubitable *bas-bleu*, Hélienne de Crenne, famous as the author of the first autobiographical novel, *Les Angoisses douloureuses qui procedent d'amour*, Lyons, 1538. She was exceedingly well educated, thoroughly versed in the Latin classics and was fond of displaying her knowledge. A style intercalated with latinisms was to her mind the one most to be desired. As a result, her admirers had considerable difficulty in reading her works, and it was finally necessary for Claude Collet to revise them in 1550, and to translate several passages (1).

In her *Epistres familiares et invectives*, Paris, 1539, we find both attacks upon her sex and also a vigorous defense of the rights of her fellow women to study as much as they desired. In one of these epistles she says that fidelity is so little characteristic of women that the man who marries would do well to have a large heart, since he will have to accept someone else as well as his wife.

« O combiê doit premediter l'homme saige, premier qu'au lien matrimonial se submette, et s'il delibere de femme s'accôpaigner : il doit faire son cueur large, pource qu'il puisse recepuoir tout ce qu'avec elle a de costume venir. »

(Hélienne de Crenne, *Epistres familiares et invectives*, Paris, 1539, *Epistre invective* II).

In the fourth invective epistle she attacks a representative of those who feel that a woman has no right to be educated, and think that men are as learned creatures as if they had sprung like Minerva from the forehead of Jupiter, or as if they too had drunk of the fountain of wisdom (2). Such people, says she, conclude that women are fit for nothing but spinning, and would forbid them the privilege of an education. Such a conception is due to ignorance, for if these carping critics were more widely read, they would have found in the works of renowned writers such praises of women as would have obliged them to suppress their inveterate scorn and dislike.

(1) Cf. LOVIOT, Louis, « Hélienne de Crenne » *Revue des livres anciens*, 1913, II, pp. 137-45.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, IV.

« ...par especial tu increpe la muliebre condition. Et parlant en general tu dis que femmes sont de rudes et obnubilez esperitz : parquoy tu cōcludz, que aultre occupation ne doibuent avoir que le fillier : Ce m'est vne chose admirable de ta promptitude, en ceste determinatiō. I'ay certaine euidēce par cela... tu prohiberois le benefice literaire au sexe femenin : L'improperant de n'estre capable des bonnes lettres. Si tu auois esté bien studieux en diversitez de liures, aultre seroit ton opinion. Aumoins si ton inueterée malice, ne te stimuloit de persister, en l'inimité que tu porte aux dames, qui pourroit estre l'occasion qu'en silence tu passerois les louenges d'icelles : dont les nobles orateurs ont decorez leurs escriptz. »

(*Ibid.*, IV).

Hélisenne is the only woman to appear as a champion of her sex in the first part of the century. She recalls Christine de Pisan by her intellectual ability, but her defense of her sex is far from being as complete or as carefully planned as that of her predecessor. Hélisenne is more interested in displaying her own erudition than in protesting against the injustice done her sex. She is interesting to us chiefly because she was a *bas-bleu* in an age when such creatures were rather rare, and so aroused much discussion.

The first part of the sixteenth century is remarkable, as far as contributions made to the literature dealing with women are concerned, chiefly for the work of Erasmus, who, as has already been pointed out, went further than any of his contemporaries (except, perhaps, Sir Thomas More) in championing real changes in the condition of women. But apart from these two authors, neither of them French, the period is not entirely devoid of interest, for certainly Martin Franc stands out as an ardent, although at times a somewhat unbalanced defender of women. His work is often mediaeval and theological in tone, employing frequently arguments drawn from the story of creation to prove his rather untenable position of the superiority of the female sex. One of his most radical and modern points is his defense of a single standard of morality. Agrippa is another who follows

closely in Martin Franc's footsteps, and who adds little that is new, except a rather amusing effort to prove woman's superiority by the meaning of words, and the mysterious values inherent in the letters composing them. He goes back to a point already made by Christine when he discusses the question of who was guilty of the first sin. He is certainly more philosophical in his treatment than Martin Franc, and is a modern feminist when he advocates that women hold office. This part of the century marks also the reawakening of the feminist quarrel which had been begun by Christine a century before, a quarrel which was destined to become inextricably connected in the years immediately following with the movement known as Neo-Platonism.

CHAPTER III

THE SECOND PART OF THE CENTURY (1542-1560).

Neo-Platonism and *La Querelle des Femmes* : Héroët, Castiglione. Pernette du Guillet, Maurice Scève, Rabelais, Tiraqueau, de Billon, *La Louange des femmes*, Postel, Charles Estienne, Louise Labé, Des Periers, Marguerite de Navarre, Tahureau.

The second part of the sixteenth century may be said to begin with the publication in 1542 of *La Parfaicte amye* of Antoine Héroët, which has as its subject the theory of Platonic love. Here the poet is not concerned with the debates over the superiority of woman or man which has interested such writers as Agrippa or Gratian du Pont, for nowhere in the poem is there to be found any solution, or even any discussion of this much mooted question.

To find the source of the ideas embodied in *La Parfaicte amye* it is necessary to turn to the *Amie du Court* of La Borderie which had preceded it only by several months, and, back of that, to *Il Cortigiano* of Baldassare Castiglione, published in Italy in 1528. The strong influence exerted by the latter work is to be seen in the fact that it was translated into French in 1537, and that six more French translations appeared before the end of the century (1). Its influence is seen also in the number of French imitations that appeared in both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (2). It was read

(1) Cf. BRUNET, I, pp. 1630, 1631.

(2) Cf. MAULDE LA CLAVIERE, R. de, *Les Femmes de la Renaissance*, Paris, 1898, p. 362.

by every woman interested in Platonic love and may be said to have been the Bible of Platonism (1).

Book III of *Il Cortigiano* has as its subject the court lady and the qualities that she should possess. Many of the ideas expressed in it have direct relation to our subject ; for that reason, and also because of the important part played by the book in French literature, it has been deemed advisable to include it.

Gaspar felt that women should have the same training as men, and that all rules applying to the perfect courtier should apply also to the lady. But Magnifico Guiliano, who had been given the task of formulating rules of conduct and training for the court lady, has quite a different opinion. Women to his mind should possess certain qualities differing from those of men ; they should not be trained in physical exercises ; their manners, speech, and gestures should be more gentle and delicate than those of men — in short, there should be nothing alike in the two sexes.

« E perché il signor Gaspar ha detto, che le medesime regule che son date per lo Cortigiano, serveno ancor alla Donna : io son di diversa opinione ché, benché alcune qualità siano comuni e così necessarie all' omo come alla donna son poi alcun' altre che più si convengono alla donna che all' omo, ed alcune convenienti all' omo, dalle quali essa deve in tutto esser aliena. Il medesimo dico degli esercizi del corpo ; ma sopra tutto parmi che nei modi, maniere, parole, gesti, portamenti suoi, debba la donna essere molto dissimile dall' omo ; perché come ad esso conviene mostrar una certa virilità soda e ferma, così alla donna sta ben aver una tenerezza molle e delicata, con maniera in ogni suo movimento di dolcezza femminile, che nell' andare e stare e dir ciò che si volgia sempre la faccia parer donna, senza similitudine alcuna d'omo. »

(Cian, V., ed., *Il Cortigiano del conte Baldasar Castiglione*, Firenze, 1894, p. 260.)

(1) This subject has been fully discussed in a series of articles by Pietro Toldo, « Le courtisan dans la littérature française et ses rapports avec l'œuvre de B. Castiglione », Herrig, *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, vol. CIV (1899-1900) pp. 75, 313 ; CV (1900-1901) p. 60.

According to Guiliano the lady should be learned and cultured, and should be taught music, painting, and dancing (1).

Gaspar then gives utterance to the ever popular idea that woman is the imperfect work of Nature, who, left to herself, would always produce men ; and that just as trees sometimes bring forth imperfect fruit, so woman is an animal produced in a haphazard fashion, or by accident.

« Dico ben che omini sapientissimi hanno lassato scritto che la natura, perciò che sempre intende e disegna far le cose più perfette, se potesse, produrria continuamente omini ; e quando nasce una donna, e difetto o error della natura e contra quello che essa vorrebbe fare ; come si vede ancor d'uno che nasce cieco, zoppo, o con qualche altro mancamento, e negli arbori molti frutti che non maturano mai ; così la donna si pò dire animal prodotto a sorte e per caso ; e che questo sia, vedete l'operazion dell'omo e della donna, e da quelle pigliate argomento della perfezion dell' uno e dell'altro. »

(*Ibid*, p. 267).

To this Guiliano replied that those who read the historians, both ancient and modern, would find that women had been as powerful as men — that they had fought in wars, gained great victories, ruled with wisdom and justice and done all that men could do. As for learning, it was written that they had been philosophers and poets and eloquent lawyers. Women are equal in all, even in courage (2).

Gaspar replies that another and a great argument for the superiority of man is the fact that a woman is always wanting to be a man, and that this desire is an instinctive one, leading her to desire his perfection.

« Grande argomento della perfezion dell'omo e della imperfezion della donna è, che universalmente ogni

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 265.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 269.

donna desidera esser omo, per un certo istinto di natura, che la insegna desiderar la sua perfezione. »,

(*Ibid.*, p. 271.)

Frigio then advanced the argument that woman was the cause of original sin, and that because of her has come all of the wretchedness and suffering existent in the world. But Giuliano says that this sin was corrected by one woman who brought greater happiness and blessing to the world than her ancestor had brought harm, and that the original sin was atoned for by the merits of the Virgin.

« La prima donna errando fece altrui errar contra Dio, e per eredità lassò all'umana generazion la morte, gli affanni e i dolori, e tutte le miserie e calamità che oggidì al mondo si sentono... Rispose il Magnifico Giuliano... non sapete voi, che quello error medesimamente fu corretto da una Donna, che ci apportò molto maggior utilità che quella non v'avea fatto danno, di modo che la colpa che fu pagata con tai meriti se chiama felicissima ? »

(*Ibid.*, p. 274.)

Certainly the main reason for the overwhelming success of *Il Cortigiano* in France was that part of the work considered above, dealing with the problem of woman and also with love (1). It gave rise to much comment, and finally became the cause of a long debate on the theory of Platonic love in which Héroët participated by means of his *La Parfaicte amye* already mentioned (2).

In this latter poem is to be found a veritable code of spiritual love. Perfect love, as Héroët sees it, depends not upon passing physical beauty, but upon virtue (or spiritual beauty); it is the love of two spirits, united formerly in heaven, meeting again on earth, and loving each other with a love spiritual rather than physical. It is

(1) Manuscript translations of the third book of *Il Cortigiano* were already in existence before the complete translation had been printed.

(2) Cf. HÉROËT, A., *Œuvres poétiques*, ed. F. Gohin, *Société des textes français modernes*, Paris, 1909, p. xviii of *Notice biographique*.

through such love that one arrives at the conception of the highest and purest love, that of God, which is the source and end of all other forms.

A woman cannot be condemned for loving someone other than her husband, as long as her life is an exemplary one, and if she has contented herself with one lover.

« Les gens d'honneur redoubter je ne puis,
Qui ont passé les destroits ou je suis ;
Car si d'aymer vient toute honnesteté
Et leur souvient de ce qu'ilz ont esté
Soit homme ou femme, ilz me pardonneront.
Et mesme ceulx qui me condamneront
De n'avoir pas saintement observé
Le droict d'aymer au mary réservé,
Quand ilz scauront ma vie et ma conduicte,
Par une loy dedans leurs cueurs escripte
M'exceuseront, quoy qu'ilz en vueillent dire. »

(Héroët, *op. cit.*, p. 20.)

The same idea was already expressed in *Il Cortigiano* — that if, because of hatred of her husband or love for another, she happened to fall in love, she should love only with her heart (or soul), and that if she is not married she should love only one whom she could marry. There is no suggestion of unlimited free love, nor is purely sexual affection condoned.

« Se alla donna di Palazzo occorrerà questo infortunio, che l'odio del marito o l'amor l'altri la induca ad amare, voglio che ella niuna altra cosa allo amante conceda eccetto che l'animo, né mai gli faccia dimostrazion alcuna certa d'amore, né con parole, né congesti, né per altro modo, talché esso possa esserne sicuro... Se la mia donna di Palazzo... non sarà maritata avendo d'amare, voglio che ella ami uno col quale possa maritarsi. »

(*Il Cortigiano*, p. 331).

Some girls, says *La Parfaicte amye*, are married against their will to improve the social standing of their family and are thus placed at the mercy of a master. If they have a lover, where is the harm in loving him, since it is

impossible to love a husband who refuses to make them happy. Rather should he who has merited her affection be its recipient.

« Si par parents, par commune raison,
Si pour haulser l'honneur de ma maison,
A la mercy d'ung maistre suis submise
Long temps après qu'avoir esté requise
D'ung serviteur, lequel n'estant plus sien,
Je ne pouvois esperer d'estre mien,
Si je sers l'ung de mauldicte aventure
Et je commande à l'autre de nature
Si l'ung m'est vie et l'autre dure mort,
En bien ayment, auquel feray-je tort,
Ou à celuy qui de mon heur abuse,
Ou à celluy que maulgré moy reffuse ?
Est-ce à celluy qui ne sçait ny entend
Aultre malheur que d'estre trop content ?
Ou à celluy qui maintes fois a veu
Aultre usurper le bien qui luy est deu,
Qui a vouloir et raison de le prendre,
Que lon occist et ne s'ose deffendre ?
Ha faulte faicte avant d'y penser,
Que je ne suis à te recommencer !
Bien tost serions eulx et moy advertis
Que de mes biens injustement partis
Celluy en doibt estre seul herité,
Qui en a part et a tout merité. »

(*Parfaicte amye*, pp. 21, 22, 23 (lines 329-52).)

This idea is likewise found in *Il Cortigiano* (1).

During the first part of the sixteenth century Lyons had become a center of Italian culture. The city was

(1) « Alcune sono dai padri maritate per forze a vecchi, infermi, schifi e stomacosi, che le fan vivere in continua miseria. E se questi tali fosse licito fare il divorzio, e separarsi da quelli co'quali son mal congiunte, non saria forse da comportar loro che amassero altri che'l marito; ma quando,... occorre che nel letto, che dovrebbe esser nido di concordia e d'amore, sparge la male detta furia infernale il seme del veneno, che poi produce lo sdegno, il sospetto e le pungenti spini dell'odio che tormenta quelle infelici anime, legate crudelmente nella indissolubil catena insino alla morte; perché non volete voi, che a quella donna sia licito cercar qualche refrigerio a così duro flagello e dare ad altri quello che dal marito e non solamente sprezzato, ma aborrito? »

(*Il Cortigiano*, p. 330.)

at times the place where Louis XII and Francis I came with their court, where Marguerite of Navarre was a frequent visitor, and where Catherine de Medici had established an Italian colony. It gradually became a place attractive to scholars, especially to the humanists. One could find there a group of rich bourgeois possessed of a consciousness of their need of learning that sprang from their continual association with the most learned men of the century ; a school of medicine which attracted many scholars ; and a printing press to which came learned men as editors and proof-readers. Another attraction was the absolute freedom of thought that was possible. Even the women of Lyons became interested in learning, and desired to follow in the footsteps of the Italian women whose culture and intellectual attainments were the object of envy to their less fortunate French sisters. Because there was no nobility in Lyons, the rich bourgeois and their wives were participants in all court affairs, and the wives were present with their husbands at the fêtes given from time to time in honor of royalty.

One of the most interesting of these women was Pernette du Guillet. In 1545 there was published by the press of Jean de Tournes at Lyons *Les Rymes de la gentille et vertueuse dame Pernette du Guillet*. Perhaps the most interesting part of the work, and certainly the most valuable for this study, is the preface in which we learn that this young poet was skilled in all musical instruments, and played so well that she astonished even the most skilled musicians. But she was not only proficient in music, — she knew Italian and Spanish, was fairly well versed in Latin, and was prevented only by her premature death from undertaking the study of Greek. The hope of the editor in publishing her poems was that they might incite some other young women of Lyons to write verse, so that the women of that city might become rivals of those Italian women who had become so famous through their writings that they had even dimmed the lustre of men (1).

(1) Cf. AYNARD, J., ed., *Les Poètes lyonnais, précurseurs de la Pléiade*, Collection des chefs-d'œuvres méconnus, Paris, 1924, pp. 36, 37.

Pernette du Guillet's claim to fame lies less in her verse however, than in the fact that she is the first bourgeois woman poet whose works have been preserved. She represents the attitude already indicated as characteristic of her sex at Lyons, where women, at the time when Renaissance culture was making its appearance there, were desirous of becoming as well-educated as the great ladies, of whom Marguerite of Navarre was the shining example (1).

One of Héroët's followers was Maurice Scève, leader of the Renaissance movement at Lyons, and author of *Délie, objet de plus haulte vertu*, 1544. This poem shows the influence of Héroët and likewise of Petrarch, whose fervent admirer Scève always remained. Scève's chief claim to renown lies in these verses which gave him his position as head of the Lyonnaise school. The woman to whom he addressed the *Délie* is supposed to have been Pernette du Guillet, who thanks her lover for having freed her from the vice of ignorance (2).

The position taken by Rabelais in the *querelle des femmes* is most interesting. At first glance it might seem that he was on the side of those who defended the sex, for in the letter written by Gargantua to his son in which he speaks of the passion for learning that has come upon society — where everyone is versed in the various branches of knowledge, — he declares that even women and girls have aspired to intellectual attainments. Rabelais makes no effort to rebuke them for such aspirations (3).

« Les femmes et filles ont aspiré à ceste louange et manne celeste de bonne doctrine. »

Again, in the chapter on the famous *abbaye de Thélème* founded by Gargantua, are to be found sympathetic references to women, for he says that everyone in that abbey knew how to read, write, sing, play musical instruments and to speak and write five or six languages. Never

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

(2) Cf. BAUR, A., *Maurice Scève et la renaissance lyonnaise*, Zurich diss., 1906, pp. 77-79.

(3) Cf. *Pantagruel*, (ed. A. Lefranc, III), ch. VIII, p. 104.

had anyone seen women more beautiful, less annoying and more learned than those who were to be found there.

« Tant noblement estoient apprins qu'il n'estoit entre eulx celluy ne celle qui ne sceust lire, escrire, chanter, jouer d'instruments harmonieux, parler de cinq ou six langaiges, et en iceulx composer, tant en carme que en oraison solue.

...Jamais ne feurent veues dames tant propres, tant mignonnes, moins fascheuses, plus doctes, à la main, à l'agueille, à tout acte muliebre honneste et libere que là estoient. »

(Rabelais, *Œuvres*, 4 vols. ed., Abel Lefranc, 2d ed., Paris, 1913-22, I, *Gargantua*, ch. 57, pp. 431, 432.)

When Gargantua plans his monastery he declares that since it was customary to admit to a convent only those women who were *borgnes*, *boyteuses*, *bossues*, *laydes*, *defaictes*, *folles*, *insensees*, *maleficiées* and *tarees*, he intends to have only those who are beautiful in his. Men are not only to have free access to it, but they are likewise to be admitted as members of the community. Also both sexes were to be given full right to leave the monastic life when they so desired. (1)

It might be suggested that Rabelais nowhere lays down any rules for the conduct to be observed in the abbey (except the famous phrase *Fay ce que voudras*). It is altogether possible that free love may have had complete and unrestrained license. But there is implied in the provision applicable to their liberty to renounce monastic life the idea that such a renunciation marks the end of free or trial love, and the decision that, since they are reentering the world, social conventions are to be complied with, and they are to marry (2).

« Le mariage est la fin honorable de la jeune société établie à Thélème. La vie en commun des deux sexes a pour but de faire naître les affinités électives qui

(1) Cf. *Gargantua*, ch. LII.

(2) *Ibid.*, ch. LII.

A source for the conception of the Abbaye de Thélème may also be found in Plato's *Republic*.

déterminent les unions bien assorties et constamment heureuses. »

(Stapfer, P., *Rabelais — sa personne, son génie, son œuvre* Paris, 1896, p. 264.)

Rabelais himself expresses his plan as follows :

« Par ceste raison, quand le temps venu estoit que aulcun d'icelle abbaye, ou à la requeste de ses parens, ou pour aultres causes, voulust issir hors, avecques soy il emmenoit une des dames, celle laquelle l'auroit prins pour son devot, et estoient ensemble mariez ; et si bien avoient vescu à Theleme en devotion et amytié, encores mieulx la continuoient ilz en mariaige ; d'autant s'entreaymoient ilz à la fin de leurs jours comme le premier de leurs nopces. »

(Rabelais, II, (*I^{er} livre*) ch. LXVII, p. 432.)

But this does not represent the entire feeling of Rabelais. If he glorifies women in his description of the abbey, it is because such an attitude is necessary to his antimonic conception, and he is far from praising them for themselves (1). Another side of Rabelais, that which is true to the *gaulois* tradition, appears clearly in the famous *tiers livre* when Panurge seeks counsel as to whether or not he should marry. In those chapters reappears the satirical and scornful conception of women held by the authors of the mediaeval *fabliaux*. Since this is a traditional conception, it may not represent the author's own opinion.

Women have meditated evil against men since the beginning of the world, says Rabelais, because they wished to subject them (men) to their control. Not only have they planned such things, but they have made a compact among themselves against the male sex.

« Les femmes, au commencement du monde, ou peu après, ensemblement conspirerent escorcher les hommes tous vifz, parce que sus elles maistriser

(1) Cf. LEFRANC, A., *Le Tiers livre du Pantagruel, Grands écrivains de la Renaissance*, Paris, 1914, vol. II, pp. 271, 272.

vouloient en tous lieux. Et fut cestuy decret promis, conforme, et juré entre elles par le saint Sang bie-
quoy. »

(Rabelais, *Œuvres*, ed. Burgaud & Rathery, 2 vols., Paris, Tiers livre, XVIII, p. 598.)

When Panurge begins to seek for advice as to marriage, it seems that Hippothadée is more kindly disposed towards women than any of his other counselors. According to him, no woman will ever prove unfaithful to her husband if she has been given the proper religious training, for it teaches her to cleave to her husband and to love, cherish and obey him. A wife is not to be considered desirable merely because she is rich, beautiful or of noble birth, but because she strives to follow the commands of God and to conform to the desires of her husband. It is for him to show her a good example of chastity and virtue. Such are the ideas that one would expect to hear expressed by the lips of a theologian (1).

Quite different is the opinion of Rondibilis, the physician, and the next of Panurge's advisers. He counsels him to marry, but when Panurge asks if his wife will remain faithful, Rondibilis laughs him to scorn, and replies that a married woman is inevitably false to her husband. A woman is as changeable as the moon in her affections, and is continually deceiving her husband, either before his face or behind his back.

« Mon amy, le naturel des femmes nous est figuré par la lune et en autres choses, et en ceste qu'elles se mussent, elles se contraignent, et dissimulent en la veue et presence de leurs mariz. Iceux absens, elles prennent leur advantage, se donnent du bon temps, vaguent, trottent, déposent leur hypocrisie et se declarent : comme la lune, en conjunction du soleil, n'apparoist on ciel, ne en terre. Mais, en son opposition estant au plus du soleil esloignée, reluist en sa plenitude et apparroist toute notamment on temps de nuyt. Ainsi sont toutes femmes, femmes. »

(*Pantagruel*, III, 32, p. 669.

(1) Cf. RABELAIS, III, 30, p. 601.

In short, the female sex is so fickle and so imperfect that nature seems to have been mad when she formed her. The only possible reasons for her creation are that she might be pleasing to man, and useful for the perpetuation of the race (1). It might be noted also that Rabelais, whose ideas on education represented such an advance on those of his day, devotes his attention entirely to the training of boys, and says nothing about that of girls, as if he considered it unnecessary, if not improper, that they be taught.

Rabelais also belongs among those who feel that a father has a legitimate control over his offspring in the case of marriage. In the advice given by Gargantua to Pantagruel after Panurge's journey in search of counsel as to whether he should marry, he tells him how ignoble is the conduct of a man who marries a girl against the will of her parents, and how unworthy and undutiful is any child who does not consult his or her father's wishes with regard to the choice of a husband or wife (2).

A book that undoubtedly influenced Rabelais strongly in the composition of the *Tiers livre* was the *De legibus connubialibus* of André Tiraqueau, published for the first time in 1513 and then again in 1515, 1524, and 1546, a work which can be classed among those antagonistic to women. This book did much to augment the ardor of those interested in the *querelle des femmes*, since it offered new arguments and theories, drawn from ancient texts which were unknown to most of the participants in the quarrel (3). It was to the last mentioned edition of this book that Rabelais went for inspiration, for this edition contained passages that were appearing for the first time, and which Rabelais almost literally translated in the *Tiers livre*. It must have recalled to his mind the invective against Tiraqueau found in the *τῆς Γυναικείας φύλης* of Amaury Bouchard (1552), and the years spent

(1) Cf. III, 30 p. 669.

(2) Cf. RABELAIS, III, 48, p. 736.

(3) Cf. LEFRANC, *Grands écrivains de la Renaissance*, II, p. 267.

in discussing the woman question with Tiraqueau and other friends (1).

From the first of the laws of marriage formulated by Tiraqueau we learn that the wife is inferior to her husband, and is therefore to obey his commands. The same situation is to be found in nature, where plants and animals recognize the same law (2). Force and intelligence are given to man alone ; therefore woman is never to be allowed to consider herself as equal to man. The husband is charged with giving his wife a certain amount of education. Never is he to strike or mistreat her in any fashion, and if he does, she has two efficacious means of vengeance, — adultery and poison. Tiraqueau indeed tries to prove in the eighth law that these two means of vengeance are equivalent. She has as her domain the home, the garden and the spinning wheel. If the husband desires, he may take counsel from his wife, but let him be on his guard against revealing his secrets to her for she would be sure to tell them (3).

Rabelais and Tiraqueau (as well as some of their predecessors) were responsible for what was by far the most enthusiastic and most passionate defence of women that appeared during this period, a book composed in 1550 and published in 1555 by François de Billon, entitled *Le Fort inexpugnable de l'honneur du sexe féminin*. Its author cites as the most dangerous of the adversaries of women Giovanni Nevizzani, an Italian jurist who had composed a treatise entitled *Sylvae nuptialis libri sex*, Paris, 1521 ; Boccaccio, Gratian du Pont and Rabelais, the last the principal one (he says) of the *Pantagruelistes* or slanderers of women, and their leader in the memorable controversy (4).

The plan of François de Billon's book reminds us of that of Christine de Pisan. Just as she had built her *Cité des dames*, he proceeds to construct a fort in honor of the greatly despised sex. In his dedication he says

(1) Cf. BARAT, J., « L'influence de Tiraqueau sur Rabelais », *Revue des études rabelaisiennes*, III, 1904, pp. 138-155, 253, 275.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

(3) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

(4) Cf. de BILLON, *op. cit.*, pp. 17b-19.

that he has been so moved by the unworthy servitude to which the women of his age are subjected, that he has chosen what he considers an opportune moment to construct in Italy a massive fortress in their honor.

In his prologue the author says that because of the very old war of vituperation that is still being waged by men (and most unreasonably) against women, he has decided to compose a work superior to any other yet written in Latin, Greek or French. Therefore in 1550, he had constructed his fort in Rome, a fort provided with four double bastions and a tower in the middle. Before the tower was finished there was a skirmish led by the calumniators of the female sex, in which they were routed and taken prisoner. The bastions are named : 1^o *Force and Magnanimite* ; 2^o *Chastete and Honnestete*; 3^o *Clemence and Liberalite* ; 4^o *Devotion and Piete*. There is also for the further defence of the tower the *Contremyne de la Plume* (1).

De Billon begins by employing one of the most frequently used arguments, namely, the theological, saying that God created man like unto himself, and both male and female. Whatever differences exist between the sexes are merely physical, and are necessary for the propagation of the race. The soul is similar in both men and women, and this likeness extends also to their powers of understanding and reasoning, as well as to their final destiny (2).

« ...le grād Formateur de l'vniuers, Pere et bō Pasteur de l'vn et l'autre sexe, par son amour sapience et puissance, créa l'hōme semblable a soy masle et femmelle : la diferēce de quoy n'est cōgnue sinon es parties corporelles, esquelles étoit requise la necessaire diversité pour l'vsage de la generatiō : donānt al'vn et a l'autre semblable et mesme forme d'ame, de sorte qu'entre icelles ames ny à diferēce de sexe. La feme à le pareil entendement de l'hōme, la mesme raison, la formelle parole, aspirans tous deux égallemēt à vne felicité, en laquelle encores moins y aura dife-

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, Prologue.

(2) Cf. AGRIPPA, ch. II, p. 54.

rence, parce que suyuant la verité euangelique, la semblance des anges est promise à tous. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 1b.)

As far as the intelligence of women is concerned, this defender of the sex thinks that they are equally as gifted as men. Aristotle is cited as his authority for the statement that women have a better memory, are more alert, more sober and more constant. This proves to him that women possess certain unusual gifts and abilities, conferred upon them as a special favor (1).

If young girls were educated in the sciences as boys are, if they received the same physical training, he feels confident that there would be as many learned, vigorous and virtuous women as men, if not more. Here François de Billon expressed a theory that was reiterated many times by later writers, — that if women received an education equal to that of men there would be no intellectual differences apparent between the sexes.

« Considéré qu'il est indubitable, que si tendres Pucelles étoient côme ieunes masles communément instruites es haux degrez de science et vertu, et exercitées en exercices corporelz : Autant ou plus se trouveroient de femmes doctes, vertueuses et fortes, que d'hommes de telle qualité. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 7b.)

But after all, where did all laws subjecting women to the control of men and preventing them from receiving proper education originate ? De Billon places the entire blame upon those men who have declared : 1° that a girl is to remain at home and be trained only in the use of needle and thread ; 2° that as soon as she reaches the age of maturity she is to be subjected to the rule of a jealous husband, or delivered to the control of nuns in a convent where she lives as if in prison ; 3° that all forms of public office are prohibited to her ; and 4° that she may not even go to law for any reason whatsoever.

(1) Cf. de BILLON, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

« Que la femelle étant yssue du ventre maternel seroit (comme elle est) de la en auant tenue en la maison, quasi en ocieuse vie, ny plus ny moins que s'elle feust incapable de plus haute educatiō : ne luy etāt permis de s'exerciter, en plus part, au'au fil, et a l'eguille. L'autre qu'elle seroit soumise a l'empire de lalousye matrimoniale, ou biē entre les mains de Religieuses, comme en petites cachettes de prison serrée, si tots qu'elle auroit attaind a son age meur. Cōsecutiuemēt, tous offices publics luy sont prohibez par aucunes Loix : Et cōbiē q'vne feme soit prudēte, il ne luy est pourtāt loysible proposer son droit en Iustice : et avec ce, elle est deboutée de tout acte de deffence, de procuration, de Iudicature, d'adoptiō, de tutelle et garde, et de cause testamētaire et criminelle. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 7b, 8.)

Men have no real right to place women upon such an inferior plane, says de Billon, for as great an authority as Plato had declared in the *Republic* that she had such ability that she should be trained in all sciences, and that she was just as capable of governing as any man. He even went so far as to counsel that they be trained in the science of warfare (1).

« Plato... luy mesme au cinquieme dialogue de sa Republique à plainement soutenu la capacite de la femme estre de telle recommandation, qu'il amoneste toutes sciēces et pratiques du monde deuoir estre enseignées au sexe, aussi bien comme au masculin ; et que le gouuernement des viles et communiautez ne luy est moins propre que sont à l'homme tous offices de guerre...

Icelluy Plato en son dialogue des loix, prouue non seulement les offices et etatz deuoir estre communs autāt aux femmes au'aux hommes de toute cité bien ordonnée : mais aussi donne les raisons, par vertu dequoy femmes et filles deussent estre exercités aux armes, pour pouuoir survenir a quelque accident inopiné de la guerre ?

(*Ibid.*, p. 11).

(1) Cf. AGRIPPA and PLATO, *Republic*, Bk. V.

After the preliminary skirmish, in which he attacks those who have written bitter satires against women, de Billon finally arrives at the point where he begins the construction of his tower, which is to be composed of women who illustrate the skill of their sex in invention and composition. Among many other examples he speaks of Noema, daughter of Lamech, who invented the art of weaving flax into linen, and of Semiramis, who first built and navigated ships. (1)

« La premiere prerogative et prééminence figurée souz cette tour (de laquelle prééminence les femmes ont flory en honneur maintenât immortel) a été d'invention et composition... Vers la fin du premier age du monde ...vne femme appelée Noema fille de Lamech inuenta l'art de tissure et de la layne : premiere le lyn en fil étendre demonstra : et pour le soulagement de nos corps composa aussi l'vsage de la drapperie... La royne Semiramis... fut la premiere qui trouua l'vsage et conduyte des nauyres, Hourques et Carraques. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 22, 22b.)

— He speaks of them as inventors of agriculture, of bells and trumpets, of the art of warfare and of letters ; recounts their great fame as prophetesses, as poetesses, as moulders of the French and also of the Greek languages, as orators and lawyers. (2) Among those famous in his own age he mentions Marguerite of Navarre, Marguerite of Valois, the school of Lyons (including Pernette du Guillet) and Hélisenne de Crenne (3).

De Billon then passes to other proofs of the superiority of women. Men who persist in criticising women are doing so, in his opinion, either because they have known only worthless women (4), or because they are ignorant. It cannot even be said that the woman was the person to blame for the first sin, for if man had not yielded to

(1) Cf. CHRISTINE DE PISAN in *La Cité des dames*, who is also interested in woman as an inventor, ch. I, p. 27.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-32.

(3) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-36.

(4) Cf. CHRISTINE DE PISAN, *L'Epistre au dieu d'amours*.

temptation, punishment would never have come to the race, nor would woman have been raised by God to a position of dignity and honor in the person of the Virgin (1).

According to him, a man should have no special privileges in marriage. Again he finds sanction for his statement in the writings of the church fathers. A man who expects his wife to be faithful, must likewise remain faithful to her. Nor is man in any respect equal to God, and has no more value in the eyes of the Creator than woman. Under such circumstances he has no right to command the woman (2).

What arguments does a man offer, asks our author, in support of the statement so often made that he would not care to be a woman? He states, says de Billon, that women are by nature imperfect, cowardly, contemptible creatures, and therefore inferior to himself (3). De Billon proves by a clever comparison between the value of the left and right arms, that the existent differences between the sexes are due, as in the case of the two arms, to a difference in training and usage or advantages. This point has already been made (4).

« Qu'elle difference y à il entre l'un et l'autre bras d'un corps entier sinon par le defect de l'usage et exercice qui n'est cōmunément dōne au gauche ainsi qu'au droit? Un Gaucher exercité a la gauche en l'art d'Escrime, est il pas aussi vaillant et adroit qu'un Droittier a sa droite s'il est autant exercité? Certes ouy... Qui fait croire, que si les femmes, comme Gauchers, étoient en tout exercitées aussi songneusement que les Hōmes (qui au regard d'elles se disent droittiers) elles deuiendroient les maistresses de tous mestiers et sciences qui se peuuent acquerir: ainsi qu'elles ont fait entreuoir en toute saison passée. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 114b.)

Women's superiority is due also to the fact that men, and men alone were responsible for the betrayal, denial,

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, 68.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 78b, 81b.

(3) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 114b.

(4) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 7, de Billon, ch. III, p. 92, and also Montaigne.

condemnation and death of Christ, whereas women cared for his body after death. Because God chose to dignify all womankind, no one should venture to criticise any woman who sins ; rather should she be excused and pardoned, as Christ pardoned Mary Magdalen (1).

De Billon then makes use of the old argument that woman was created of finer material than man. Here, instead of trying to prove her superiority to man, he says that God, in creating her from man's rib made her his equal, rather than making her his inferior by creating her from his foot, or his mistress by having her originate from his head ; and that he created her for a life equal to man's and destined them both for eternity.

« L'omnipotent, en nous signifiant égalité entre ces d'eux... Voulut et en sa Providence fut arrêté, de produire le masle du lymon de la terre, comme du lieu le plus bas et materiel. Qui étoit, pour le moins luy donner, par cela, argument démonstratif de domter toute arrogance, sur discrime de plus grande noblesse en luy qu'en la femme. En apres aussi la femelle, pour en ce cas ne s'arroger sur l'homme quelque chose par aucun point qui eüst du vraisemblable ; et a ce qu'on ne la peüst en part aucune, reputer moindre que l'autre, la voulut icelluy seigneur nottâment créer, non de la terre basse (ainsi qu'il auoit fait le masle (non du pied d'icelluy pour obuier a obiet de serue cõdition) ny pareillement de la Teste, pour n'estre generallement congñue la maistresse ; mais bien, iustement et dignement de la Coste, pour et affin qu'elle feüst tenue de luy collateralle et en cette façon, a luy à jamais égalle, et de mesme hauteur, qu regard du mistaire d'icelle creation seulement ; comme de luy apres son facteur la plus aymable. Consideré d'abondant que la fême fut deslors ordonnée par la Diuine Bonté a semblable et non autre vie que celle de l'homme ; et (qui plus est) aussi bien que luy appelée a nō moindre Eternité. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 115.)

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 107b, 108.

Men who spend their efforts in vituperating against women are guilty of a serious offense, since it is written that whoever disparages, belittles and hates his neighbor is guilty of homicide. They are likewise taking away or minimizing the honor and reverence due to their own mothers, which is in itself an impious act. This last is reminiscent of a passage in the *Epistre au dieu d'amours* of Christine de Pisan (1).

In the part of his book which is called *Contremyne de la plume* there are three chapters under the subtitle *De la preexcellence des femmes* which are quite interesting. In their arguments they recall works already treated, such as the book of Cornelius Agrippa. In the first, de Billon deals with the order of creation and the material. As a preliminary, he returns to a point already made in the prologue, namely, that there is no difference in the essence of the soul in either sex, and that from that point of view neither one has any claim to superiority. But if woman has not that claim to offer, she certainly has others.

God, in creating the world, made things both incorruptible and corruptible (2). According to his plan he began with the highest of the immortals and would therefore naturally finish with the highest of mortals. When we find that God, after having created woman, rested and produced nothing more, would we not inevitably and naturally conclude that she was the perfect termination of the world? Certainly he would not have finished so marvelous a work by the production of an imperfect thing. Not only was she his last and most perfect work, but she was also his first conception, and all of the rest was created with her in mind. She was to be *la bonne bouchée*. For these reasons she deserves the respect and honor of all created things. Aside from this fact, there is also the question of the material from which this perfect being was created (3). God desired to make her of something purified and *sensiffyée*. She had likewise the advantage of being created in the beautiful Garden of Eden, to which man, created elsewhere, was

(1) Cf. de Billon, pp. 116b, 117.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 126, 126b.

(3) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 125, 125b.

brought to receive the masterpiece of God from his hands. De Billon has the very interesting idea that the freedom of women from certain maladies, to which he says men alone are subject, is due to the place of her creation, and that from it she also received an almost miraculous power to cure disease (1).

De Billon then has recourse to an argument which is that of the cabalistic philosophy used by Agrippa — the significance of names. Because of the fact that *Adam* means *Earth* and *Eve* means *Life*, the woman is naturally superior (2). Even *Woman*, the name of the sex, has a noble significance, as has likewise the Latin word *mulier* which denotes the pure substance from which woman was made. God was perfectly aware of these meanings when he gave the names to his creatures.

He repeats again the statements made by Christine de Pisan and Agrippa that woman was not the cause of the original sin, but he does so in a slightly different way. Man alone was forbidden to eat the apple and so when he disobeyed he brought sin into the world. He cites as authority for this view St. Paul who says that "through Adam have all men sinned". For this reason Christ takes upon himself the form of man, the guilty one (3). De Billon might again have cited with equal applicability St. Paul as his authority — "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" and thereby proved that the contrary was equally true (4).

The female sex excels not only for these reasons, but also because it is noted for its ability in scholarship. The author follows the usual plan, giving many examples of women who have been distinguished for their great learning — as philosophers, poetesses, astrologers, prophetesses, magicians and musicians (5).

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 126, 126b.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

(3) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 150, 150b.

(4) *I Corinthians*, xv, 21, 22.

(5) Cf. de BILLON, pp. 152b-155b.

The worth of women was so far recognized by Roman law, according to our author, that they, if guilty of crime, were simply imprisoned in a monastery or given in charge of other women, which proves, says de Billon,

« Que la condition feminine merite estre plus reuerée et choyée que tout' autre. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 159.)

Likewise the law provided that a man convicted of adultery was amenable to the full severity of the law, although the woman received nothing more than claustration as her sentence (1). This recalls the somewhat similar statements made by Cornelius Agrippa and Christine de Pisan. De Billon terminates his paragraph by the rather amusing sentence which shows, nevertheless, his point of view, "Peine aux Corbeaux, Aux Colombes la Grace" (2). He can not be regarded as an advocate of a single standard of morals, but rather of a code in which men would receive the heavier punishments.

Many who criticise and scorn, states our author, do so on the basis of the statement made to Eve. "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (3). One cannot even refute their arguments by the statement that God redeemed woman and atoned for her weakness through the death of Christ, for to such a plea they reply by the words of St. Peter or St. Paul. One of the most unjust of the latter's prohibitions is that which forbids women to speak in church. This prohibition is due, thinks de Billon, not to her incapacity, but to a statement made by Solomon that a woman's words are likely to arouse man to passionate desire because of her beauty (4). If there are husbands who keep their wives in subjection, they are fools, for a virtuous and worthy husband treats her as his equal (5).

In conclusion de Billon says that while some women may

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

(3) *Genesis*, III, 16.

(4) Cf. de BILLON, 159b-161b.

(5) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 162.

be fickle, imperfect or unworthy, it must be remembered that God has accepted and pardoned all of their faults, sins and deceptions and that his pardon should be an all sufficient reply to their detractors. Certainly no stronger advocate of the worth of woman could be found at this period, nor one who advances more varied arguments to prove his points. In many ways he represents a distinct advance over other authors who belong to the same general group, such as Christine and Agrippa.

« Sommairement, et pour rabatre tout ce que lon pourroit saintement ou allégoriquement songer de mal, d'imperfection, de fragilité ou indignité alenuiron de tout le sexe femenin. Ouy au cas encores que ce qui est diffuzément soutenu cy dedans feust fabuleux ou faux, ce point seul suffiroit et sera pour suffire en tout modeste pësée, assauoir. Que les fautes, les erreurs, les trauerses, les brunchures, les trôperyes, les traysons ou imperfections de plusieurs d'entre les femmes sont et ont été excusées, recuées et approuées de Dieu en ses saintz registres. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 255.)

Published several years before the work of de Billon, but composed perhaps about the same time was a much less important anonymous work entitled *la Louenge des femmes*, 1551. It is mentioned by de Billon who says of it,

« composé... de quelque bon Pantagrueliste (1) dans lequel l'esprit de Maistre Ian de Pontalais a voulu tenir les asises, pour en gergonnât des femmes, faire rire tout gaudisseur varlet de boutique. »

(De Billon, p. 17.)

This author says that if the gods are responsible for the creation of woman (a thing very difficult to believe), she was made only to cause trouble and suffering to the human race, for all of the sex have done nothing else but that. Even if an occasional woman be found who

(1) By this term he means one who is a slanderer of women.

seems good, she is all the more to be mistrusted, because she is the more apt to plot evil and cause trouble.

« Firent les Dieux, la femme de leurs mains ?
 (Chose qui est bien mal aisée a croire)
 La firent donq pour donner aux humains
 De tous les malheurs et de tous maux memoire ;
 Car de tout temps, soit blanche, rousse ou noire,
 N'ha rien serui, que de mal faire au monde ;
 Et la raison, sus quoy plus ie me fonde
 Est que si vne entre elles on void bonne
 C'est celle là qui est la plus profonde
 A controuer mal, et qui plus en donne. »

(*La Louenge des femmes*, Lyons, 1551, pp. 35, 36.)

After reading such invective one feels inclined to question the title of the book. Its subtitle, however, *Invention extraite du commentaire de Pantagruel sur l'Androgyne de Platon*, would tend to show its real character. The pseudonym given by the author, André Misogyne, also is proof that he meditated no praise of the female sex (1).

One of the most obscure (from the point of view of style) of the books written upon women during the sixteenth century was *Tres merueilleuses victoires des femmes du nouveau monde, et comment elles doibuent à tout le monde par Raison commander et mesmes à ceulx qui auront la monarchie du monde vieil*, Paris, 1553, the work of Guillaume Postel, a celebrated mystic, and one of the most learned men of his time. He was considered by Francis I to be a prodigy of erudition.

Postel says that God, in order to show that the intelligence of women was great, has Christ say that the gospel is to be written to preserve the memory of the deed of Mary Magdalene, though it would seem rather hard to see just what proof of woman's intelligence Postel finds in the story of Mary Magdalene.

(1) BARBIER, A., (*Dictionnaire des ouvrages anonymes*, 4 vols., and supplement, Paris, 1872-89, vol. II) says that Lacroix in an article in the *Bulletin du bibliophile* attributes the authorship of this attack to Rabelais.

« Comme l'amour, desir et cupidité à cause de l'imperfection est sans comparaison, en plus grande force et vigueur en la femme qu'en l'homme, aussi la consideration des choses par elles congneues et apprehendées est plus ardente et viue. De là vient que mon Pere et Createur le redempteur du monde Jesus, pour monstrier combien l'esprit femenin est fort, ha voulu que l'Evangile feust escript en tout le monde pour y cōgnoistre la memoire de la tressaincte Marie Magdelaine. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 7, 7b.)

Man, according to his idea, is an abridgement of the inferior and superior world, but with less of the former. On the contrary, the inferior predominates in woman. The superior part is the reasoning part, while the inferior is the sensuous. These parts are likewise of two degrees. He calls the reasoning part *Animus* and the sensuous part *Anima*. Since there are two sorts of *Animus* and two also of *Anima*, there are necessarily two degrees of *Esprit* and of *Mente*, one for man and the other for woman.

« Il est pour certain que l'homme ou masle est comme le monde superieur et inferieur le tout reduict en vn souuerain abregé, toutes foyz l'abregé du monde inferieur y est moins puissant que le superieur. Et au contraire est la femme en laquelle domine le monde inférieure. Cela est aussi tout certain que l'un et l'autre tant l'homme comme la femme ha sa formelle partie diuisée en deux parties. L'une raisonnable ou superieure, l'autre la sensuelle ou inferieure. Donc il fault qu'il y aye deux degrés de raisonnableté, et deux de sensualité. Pour parler correct et bien distinctement i'appelle la superieure partie *Animus* ou l'*Anime* et l'inferieure *Anima* ou l'*Ame*... Comme donc nous auôs veu qu'il y ha *Anime* de deux sortes et *Ame* de deux sortes, aussi fault il qu'il y aye degré d'*Esprit* et degré de *Mente* de deux sortes, l'un pour l'homme, l'autre pour la femme... La *Mente* donc ha deux degrez, l'un pour l'hōme, l'autre pour la femme, et l'*Esprit* semblablement. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 8, 8b, 9.)

Women, says he, are formed of *Esprit* which is a passive thing, and which corresponds to the material and inferior world, while man is formed of *Mente* which is active. Just as the inferior and elementary world is subject to the superior or celestial, so the woman is to man. In other words, the woman is terrestrial, the man celestial; she is the little world, and man the great.

« Car toutes les femmes du monde sont extraictes de l'Esprit ou intellect paisible, qui respond au monde materiel et inferieur, ainsi cōme les masles sont de la mente ou de l'intellect Agent. Or est il certain que tout le monde inferieur et elementaire est comme la femme soulz ou au regard du masle, qui en ceste comparaison est le ciel. En somme le monde elementaire est la femme, et le celeste est l'homme. Ou pour parler clairement le sommaire ou abbrege du monde inferieur et grand en la femme qui est le petit. Semblablement le sommaire de l'univers et grand monde est au masle. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 10.)

Woman, then, is to receive temporal domination and man spiritual. Woman alone is capable of renewing the earthly, for there is an affinity between her and it. Postel had made the acquaintance of a prophetess named Jeanne at Venice, and declaring that she had originated from the substance of Christ by His will, he designates her as the supreme ruler in religion. She will renew the inferior or feminine part of the world, just as Christ had already renewed and revived the superior or masculine part. The essential result of this renewal is to be the liberation and triumph of women. Postel gives no definite means by which this liberation is to be accomplished; he is far too much of a mystic to do more than hint in the vaguest of language at his theories, but he remains nevertheless as one of the defenders of the rights and dignity of women.

Quite characteristic in title and subject matter of the works that appeared during la *Querelle des femmes* is the pamphlet of Charles Estienne entitled *Que l'excellence de la femme est plus grande que celle de l'homme*, 1554 (1).

(1) This was read in volume 40 of the collection entitled *Femmes* of the Bibliothèque Nationale.

Estienne believes that whoever investigates the merits of women will find them to be far greater and more numerous than is generally supposed. Even their faults are fewer and less serious than those of men, and are more than atoned for by their virtues and their intelligence which more than equal those qualities in men. As the first proof of the truth of these assertions Estienne offers us the fact that woman was not created of earth as was man (1).

He refers to ancient history for proofs of the valor and superior courage of women, stating that upon many occasions they have been victorious over men, and cites such famous women as Camilla, Penthesilea, Semiramis and Zenobia as examples of feminine greatness in warfare (2). Nowhere in all his investigations in ancient history has he found any examples of greater or more illustrious virtues than those manifested by these women.

«De ma part i'ay feuilleté sus et soubz les historiens
mais ie na trouué leans exemples de vertu plus
grands, ne plus illustres, que ceulx que les dames
nous ont enseigné de tout temps. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 150.)

Just as other writers who took the side of women in the quarrel, Estienne points out that many important inventions have been made by women.

« ...Ne voit on pas aussi par experience leur esprit
en toutes subtiles inventions excéder de grâde emi-
nence celui des hommes ? Voyez au catalogue des
inventeurs des choses, si elles ne sont pas inuentrices
de plusieurs excellents et nompareils ouvrages, et
mesmemêt des lettres qui rēdent les hommes si
grands et apparens ? »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 152, 153.)

As one example of these so-called inventors he cites

(1) Cf. ESTIENNE, Ch., *Que l'excellence de la femme est plus grande que celle de l'homme*, 1554 (*Femmes*, vol. 40, pp. 148, 149).

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

Sappho, originator of the verse form that bears her name, and which rendered her superior to the poets of her day.

«Sappho trouva les vers qui de son nom furent appelez sapphiques, et eut grande contention alencontre de plusieurs excellents poetes de son temps tous lesquels a la fin elle rendit confiez. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 153.)

He alleges that many women in Spain and Germany could teach the most learned men in the land " du bon langage et polie escripture ", while there are many at the court of France who could dispute with and defeat the most learned men of the country (1).

Estienne offers as other proofs of their excellence the following facts : 1° that Christ appeared first to women after his resurrection ; 2° that Abraham was commanded by God to do as Sarah wished ; 3° that Trismegistus said that the unmarried man was to be shunned, because from woman springs all perfection ; 4° that the virtues were given feminine names by the Greeks. After enumerating these, he refuses to go further, saying that those who wish to examine the question with an open mind have only to turn to history to be easily convinced of the greatness and dignity of the sex (2).

This pamphlet gives us nothing original, and is cited merely as another in the list of those feminist advocates who participated in *la querelle des femmes*.

Mention has already been made of the group of women poets at Lyons. The best known of these was probably Louise Labé, surnamed *la belle Cordière*. She was famous not only for her beauty, her skill in horseback riding, her ability in such womanly accomplishments as embroidery and music, but also for her learning.

Louise Labé's father was an artisan who was aware of the value of education, and he therefore determined to give to his daughter Louise, who was extraordinarily intelligent, an education worthy of the position that he had won for himself in Lyonnaise society. This was to be

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 154, 155, 156.

an education *à la mode italienne* (1). He chose the Italian type of education because Lyons was, as has already been stated earlier in this study, a city thoroughly impregnated with Italian culture. He wished his daughter to be like the brilliant and cultured Italian women, rather than like the French who did not yet know how to "eslever leurs esprits au-dessus de leurs quenoilles et fuseaus (2)."

Italian standards accorded the girl an education almost the same as that given to her brother. She learned Latin and Greek and participated in the same sports and physical exercises as he did. Accordingly Louise Labé received "une éducation virile comme celle d'une jeune italienne de son époque". She studied Latin but not Greek (3).

Some of her father's theories concerning her education may have been found in Rabelais, as well as in « la Toscane française », for Rabelais urged that great emphasis be laid upon music and physical exercise, and even the « librairie » that Louise seems to have possessed had its prototype in Rabelais (4). It is quite certain that her education was exceptional for a French girl, and particularly for a girl belonging to the *bourgeoisie* (5).

It is quite probable that Louise Labé's interest in physical exercise is the result of the type of education that she received. Miss O'Connor declares also that her feminist ideas are likewise due to the same factor, and that from it came too the universality of her tastes.

« C'est sans doute en partie au caractère italien de son éducation que doit être attribué son perpétuel souci du physique. C'est entièrement à cette éducation qu'elle doit ses idées « féministes », c'est-à-dire sa croyance très ferme qu'en science et en vertu la femme était capable de « passer ou égaler les hommes » (par vertu il est probable qu'elle pensait à l'italien

(1) Cf. O'CONNOR, DOROTHY, *Louise Labé. Sa vie et son œuvre*, Paris Diss., 1926, pp. 53, 54.

(2) Quoted in O'Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

(3) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

(4) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 55, 56.

(5) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

virtù). C'est enfin de son éducation à l'italienne que vient l'universalité de ses goûts, son désir de « jouir pleinement de son être » comme dira Montaigne. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 60.)

Her house was the rendezvous of all the cultured and learned of Lyons, a sort of *Académie* over which she presided and in all of the occupations in which she excelled (1). In 1555 she published her *Œuvres* which made her well-known among her contemporaries. During the remainder of the century she was the subject of both praise and hostile criticism, the former because of her ability, the latter due perhaps to the fact that she had departed from the traditional life of a woman, or that she may have been a courtesan as some of her critics claimed (2). In the words of one of her contemporaries. —

« Ceste avoit la face plus angelique qu'humaine : mais ce n'estoit rien à la comparaison de son esprit tant chaste, tant vertueux, tant poétique, tant rare en sçavoir, qu'il sembloit, qu'il eut esté créé de Dieu pour estre admirée comme un grand prodige entre les humains. Car encor qu'elle fust instituée en langue Latin, dessus et outre la capacité de son sexe, elle estoit admirablement excellente, en la Poësie des langues vulgaires, dont rendent tesmoignage ses œuvres. »

(Paradin, G., *Mémoire de l'histoire de Lyon*, 1573, III, p. 355 (cited in Aynard, p. 102.)

She dedicated her volume of poems to another woman poet, her contemporary Clémence de Bourges. In this dedication are to be found her ideas as to the education and occupations of her sex. Since women are more free to learn, she says, than they have been in the past, they should apply themselves zealously in order to show men

(1) Cf. de LA PORTE et de LACROIX, *Histoire littéraire des femmes françaises*, 5 vols., Paris, 1769, I, p. 73.

(2) Cf. AYNARD, J., ed., *Les Poètes lyonnais, précurseurs de la Pléiade*, Paris, 1924, pp. 62, 63. Miss O'Connor, whose study of Louise Labé has already been cited, gives documents supporting her statement that Louise was a courtesan.

what a mistake it was to deprive them of the privilege during so long a time. Her sex should be able to equal, if not exceed the male sex in learning and virtue as well as in beauty. For this reason, it was to be hoped that all the women among her contemporaries would forsake their spinning wheels, in order to prove that they were able to rule in other than purely domestic affairs (1). The result of such action would mean not only the enhanced reputation of women, but also that men would be more industrious, since they would be ashamed to be surpassed by women.

« Estant le tems venu, mademoiselle, que les severes loix des hommes n'empeschent plus les femmes de s'appliquer aus sciences et disciplines ; il me semble que celles qui ont la commodité, doivent employer cette honneste liberté que notre sexe ha autrefois tant désirée, à icelles apprendre ; et montrer aus hommes le tort qu'ils nous faisoient en nous privant du bien et de l'honneur qui nous en pouvoit venir... Je ne puis faire autre chose que prier les vertueuses dames d'eslever un peu leurs esprits dessus leurs quenouilles et fuseaux et s'employer à faire entendre au monde que si nous ne sommes faites pour commander, si ne devons nous estre desdaignées pour compagnes tant en affaires domestiques que publiques, de ceus qui gouvernement et se font obéir. Et outre la reputation que notre sexe en recevra nous aurons valu au public que les hommes mettront plus de peine et d'estude aus sciences vertueuses, de peur qu'ils n'ayent honte de voir preceder celles, desquelles ils ont prestendu estre toujours supérieurs quasi en tout... De laquelle ne devez esloigner ne espargner votre esprit, jà de plusieurs et diverses graces accompagné, ny votre jeunesse et autres faveurs de fortune, pour aquerir cet honneur que les lettres et les sciences ont accoutumé porter aux personnes qui les suyvent. »

(AYNARD, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-159.)

Among the *conteurs* of the sixteenth century there are

(1) Cf. hope expressed by the publisher of Pernette de Guillet's poems, ch III., p. 84.

to be found from time to time hints of what might be called free love. Since the *conteurs* represent for the most part the *esprit gaulois*, such ideas cannot be taken too seriously, but they are none the less interesting. The earliest expression of these ideas, from the chronological point of view, is to be found in the *Contes ou nouvelles récréations et joyeux devis* of Bonaventure des Périers, published in 1558.

He says that he would not seek to defend the sex for inconstancy, for a woman will justify her infidelity to her husband by the perfection of her lover, claiming that she considers herself *honored* by the love of so worthy a person, and that to such a statement a husband has no adequate reply. To be sure, if the husband were honorable and worthy, he might truly claim his wife for himself alone, but if his conscience does not judge him so, he has no reason to forbid his wife to love someone more lovable than himself. This idea recalls somewhat the theories advanced in *la Parfaicte Amye* and *Il Cortigiano*, but it must be remembered that the former books counselled only a love that was Platonic, i. e., spiritual, and into which no physical element was permitted to enter. Here, on the contrary, the discontented and unhappy wife is given free rein in physical love, and this license is regarded as justifiable if the husband's person, abilities, character be not to the taste of his wife.

« De moy, si je pensois faire plaisir aux femmes en les defendant par leur fragilité, je le ferois volentiers, qui ne cherche qu'à leur faire service ; mais j'aurois peur d'estre desadvoué de la pluspart d'entre elles, et des plus aymables de toutes, desquelles chacune dira : « Ce n'est point legiereté qui le me fait faire, ce sont les grandes perfections d'un homme, qui merite plus que tous les plaisirs qu'il pourroit recevoir de moy ; je me tiens grandement honorée et m'estime très heureuse, me voyant aymée d'un si vertueux personnage comme celui-là. Et certes, ceste raison là est grande et quasi invincible ; à laquelle n'y ha mary qui ne fust bien empesché de respondre. Vray est que, si d'avanture il se pense honneste et vertueux, il ha occasion de retenir sa

femme toute pour soy ; mais, si sa conscience le juge qu'il n'est pas tel, il semble qu'il n'ayt pas grand raison de tancer ny de deffendre à sa femme d'aymer un homme plus aymable qu'il n'est. » (*Nouvelle XC.*)

(Bonaventure des Periers, *Contes ou nouvelles récréations et joyeux devis*, 2 vols., Paris, 1874, II, p. 93.

A similar illustration is to be found in the *Heptaméron*. Here, a wife, accused by her husband of infidelity, and threatened with punishment, inquires why he should punish her for the same sort of conduct of which he himself had been guilty for some time. Does God's law, she asks, exempt from condemnation the unfaithful husband, while man's law condemns the unfaithful wife? She finds a justification for her action in the fact that she knows of her husband's indifference and infidelity, and had known of it long before following his example; whereas he had deserted a faithful and loving wife to seek elsewhere and without right that which was legitimately his at home. Also he loves someone older and less attractive than his lawful wife, and a woman who is the wife of his best friend, so that he is false both to his marriage vows and to his duty as a friend; she, on the contrary, loves a young man who is free, as well as much handsomer, younger, and more lovable than her husband. To this her husband cannot reply, except with words that represent the traditional masculine point of view: *L'Honneur d'un homme et d'une femme n'est pas tout un ni semblable* (nouvelle XV, p. 125 (1)).

The woman who best represented in the France of the sixteenth century the Renaissance culture which had come from Italy, and which had been adopted with such eagerness by the women of Lyons as well as other cities of France was Marguerite de Navarre, author of *l'Heptaméron*, above cited.

In these tales are to be found, side by side with stories filled with the *esprit gaulois*, such treatises on the theory

(1) Cf. MARGUERITE DE NAVARRE, *L'Heptaméron*, Paris, Garnier, n. d., pp. 124, 125.

of Platonic love as are given in *nouvelle* 19. Here Parlamente, its exponent, says that one can never love God perfectly without having loved perfectly some human creature. In reply to Saffredent's question as to what constitutes perfect love, she says that it implies the search by the lover for something perfect, aiming always at virtue, and contemning all that is sensual and base. Love thus directed will arrive eventually at the highest good, which is solely spiritual. This recalls Héroët, and his theories of Platonic love.

« Encores ay-je une opinion, dist Parlamente, que jamais homme n'aymera parfaitement Dieu, qu'il n'ait parfaitement aymé quelque créature en ce monde... Qu'appellez-vous parfaitement aymer, dist Saffredent ? Estimez-vous parfaicts amans ceulx qui sont transiz et qui adorent les dames de loing, sans oser monstrier leur volonté ?... J'appelle parfaict amans, luy repondits Parlamente, ceulx qui cherschens en ce qu'ilz aiment quelque perfection, soit beaulté, bonté ou bonne grâce ; tousjours tendans à la vertu et qui ont le cueur si hault et si honneste qu'ilz ne veulent, pour mourir, mettre leur fin aux choses basses que l'honneur et la conscience réprouvent ; car l'âme, qui n'est créée que pour retourner à son souverain Bien, ne faict, tant qu'elle est dedans ce corps, que désirer d'y parvenir. Mais à cause que les sens par lesquels elle en peut avoir nouvelles sont obscurs et charnels par le péché du premier père ne luy peuvent monstrier que les choses visibles plus approchantes de la perfection, après quoi l'âme court cuydans trouver en une beaulté extérieure en une grâce visible et aux vertuz morales, la souveraine beaulté, grâce et vertu. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 208.)

Similar ideas are to be found in *nouvelle* 21 where Parlamente defends the honor and dignity of woman's love, which is based upon God and honor in contradistinction to man's which rests largely upon physical pleasure ; in *nouvelle* 24, inspired undoubtedly by the *Banquet* of Plato and in which is shown the rôle played by love in the world ; in *nouvelle* 40, where we find that perfect

love is always in harmony with God's command and so knows neither shame nor dishonor ; in *nouvelle* 57, the story of the lover who wears his lady's glove because he can obtain from her no greater favor ; and in *nouvelle* 63, in which pure and spiritualized love is once more defended, and where Marguerite gives enthusiastic praise of that love which is spiritual rather than carnal.

Marguerite de Navarre composed also a book of letters « pour défendre son sexe contre d'injustes mépris ». These are now lost, but Pierre de l'Escale in *la Défense des femmes*, 1612, gives an analysis of it. According to her, woman is the masterpiece of God since she was formed after man, as his last work. She is more intelligent than man, she possessed « le transcendant des choses créées ». Marguerite is thus the first author to recognize the intuitive powers of women. Woman is able to command and can claim political equality as the logical consequence of historical and natural laws, for she is the most intelligent, as well as the most reasonable being and therefore the most capable of ruling justly. In the first civilised society « les femmes commandèrent, jusqu'au moment où l'homme usurpa leur pouvoir ». In other words, Marguerite establishes the theory of the matriarchate (1).

The learning of Marguerite de Navarre, and the profound esteem in which she was held by the majority of her contemporaries, is perhaps best expressed in the funeral oration pronounced in her honor by Charles de Sainte-Marthe. He declares that since she surpassed others of her sex in intelligence, and had a manly heart in her woman's body, she wished to spend her time in occupations worthy of a man. She handled books instead of a spinning wheel, or if she indulged in any purely feminine occupations, it was only when someone was reading aloud some profound book, or she was dictating some of her compositions (2).

(1) Cf. ABENSOUR, L., *La Femme et le féminisme avant la Révolution* Paris, 1923, *Introduction*, pp. 7, 8.

(2) Cf. SAINTE-MARTHE, Ch. de, *Oraison funèbre de Marguerite de Navarre* (ed. of l'*Heptaméron* of Roux de Lincy et Montaignon, 2 vols., Paris, 1880), vol. I, p. 76.

Not every one approved of the great thirst for learning manifested by this princess, and a certain amount of raillery and even of malevolent criticism was directed against her for occupations so unfitted to her sex as the reading of books of philosophy and indulging in physical exercises (1). Sainte-Marthe replies to such critics that although there may be certain occupations reserved to men and others to women, there are likewise things common to both sexes, and that therefore the reading of books of philosophy which have not been harmful to those who had lived before that time should not be forbidden to women who are as able to profit by such instruction as men (2).

Jacques Tahureau, the author of a series of dialogues printed first at Paris in 1562 and republished fourteen times before the end of the century, may be included among the feminists of this period. Of these dialogues, the one most interesting for our study is between *le Democritic*, adversary of women, and *le Cosmophile*, their ardent defender.

The former uses as his first argument for the inferiority of the sex the fact that they cannot govern and render justice as can a man, to which the latter gives as an answer the example of the Amazons who not only governed well, but led in warfare against their enemies (3), and claims that any women would do as well in contemporary times if men gave them sufficient liberty. *Le Democritic* replies that these women cannot be offered as proof, since whatever they accomplished was through outrageous cruelty, treachery, or good fortune, and that therefore their example should not be grounds of pride for other women.

Le Democritic. — « La femme estre plus imparfaite que l'homme.

Premierement regarde si la femme sçauroit gouuerner

(1) Cf. LEFRANC, A., « Marguerite de Navarre et le Platonisme de la Renaissance », *Gr. écriv. de la Ren.* II, p. 143.

(2) Cf. SAINTE-MARTHE, p. 77.

(3) This is the first mention made of the Amazons in literature dealing with the question of feminism.

et entretenir vne République, rendant ce qui appartient à vn chacun cōme fait l'homme.

Le Cosmophile. — Pourquoi ne le ferōt elles pas aussi bien que les hommes, n'en voyons nous pas les exemples toutes euidentes des Amazones, lesquelles ont tant bien gouverné leur Republique, mené guerres et vaincu leurs ennemis et le feroient aussi bien aujourdhuy comme elle' l'ont fait, n'estoit le peu de liberté qu'elles ont de nous autres hommes.

Le Democritic. — Quand est des Amazones, elles ne peuuent pas estre à bon droit louées du gouuernemēt de leur païs, comme de chose qui ne leur estoit advenue que par trop mechāte inuētion et outrageuse cruauté, de laquelle ell'usoient pour lors, comme ell'sont de tous tēs coutumieres d'vser enuers nous autres femmes en ont pry' si pour le cruel et abominable gouuernement des Amazones, les autres femmes en ont occasion d'aucune louāge : et si tu veux dire qu'elles ayent vaillamment emporté la victoire sur leurs ennemis, ça este plustost par fortune et cauteleuse trahison, que par force ou grandeur de courage qui fust en elles. »

((Tahureau, J., *Les dialogues de feu Jacques Tahureau* gentilhomme du Mans, non moins profitables que facetieux, Paris, 1565, pp. 11, 12, 13.)

The two adversaries then pass to arguments tinged with theology in which *le Cosmophile* says that God in creating woman intended that she should at least equal man, if not be more perfect. His opponent replies that woman's imperfection is proved by the fact that she is forbidden in the New Testament to preach publicly while men are allowed to do so.

Le Cosmophile. — « Il sembleroit presque à t'ouyr parler que Dieu faillit quand il crea la femme qui seroit aller tout au contraire de la verité, car selon dieu si la femme n'est plus parfaite que l'hōme pour le moins elle doit égaler.

Le Democritic. — Puis que tu es entré sur les termes de la Theologie... ie te prouueray biē par icelle la femme estre plus imparfaite que l'hōme, ce que l'on peut aisément cognoistre par les defenses qui lui

sont faites au nouveau testament de prêcher publiquemēt la parole de dieu, ce qui a esté commandé et permis aux hommes. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 14.)

The most important contribution made in this part of the century is the theory of the Neo-Platonists with regard to love. The period is interesting also for the number of women who appear not only as champions of their sex, but also as illustrious examples to be cited by feminist contemporaries or successors. As has been noted, the *esprits gaulois* and *courtois* appear side by side, and even the theological arguments have not entirely disappeared from view.

CHAPTER IV

THE LAST PART OF THE CENTURY (1560-1600)

The last echoes of the *Querelle des femmes* : Marconville, Taillemont, Yver, Ronsard, Garnier, du Bartas, Marie de Romieu, Montaigne, Hotman, Des Roches, C. and M., De Cholières, Henri (II) Estienne, Brantôme, Valens, *Essai sur l'âme des femmes*, Montchrestien, Piccolomini, *le Triumphe des dames*, d'Aubigné. The transition : Marie de Gournay.

After about 1560 the *Querelle des femmes* became less violent, and fewer books appeared having as their sole purpose the attack or defense of women. If, from time to time, such books were written, they represented the undercurrent, rather than the main stream of thought during the latter part of the century. The question of the type of education that a woman should receive met with more careful and general consideration than it had had up to that time. Not until Marie de Gournay, whose books belong to the seventeenth century, but who is really of the sixteenth, do we find another advocate of her sex as ardent in her defense, and even more far-reaching in her demands than Christine de Pisan.

In 1564 appeared a book by Jean de Marconville, *De la bonté et mauvaistié des femmes*, a title which recalls works previously examined. It offers little that is new, for de Marconville employs, in order to prove the superiority of women, the same old arguments of the material and place of creation.

« Mais... neantmoins que la femme semble estre vn vaisseau fragile et infirme, toutesfois si nous voulons plus exactement considerer ses excellences et perfections, nous l'admirerons comme vne riche bou-

tique en laquelle reluisent les raisons de la diuine Sapience, et la trouuerons douée de plus grande dignité et préeminence que l'homme, lequel Dieu crea d'un element gros et pesant, sçauoir est de l'ordure et sale limon de la terre et excremēt d'icelle, mais il fist la femme de la chair et coste de l'hōme, matiere purifiée, vivifiée, et animée, afin que par leur leurs sexes meslez ensemble, ils peussent multiplier lignée et par la multitude d'icelle remplir toute la terre. Cela nous demonstre clairement que les dons et graces celestes n'ont en rien esté desniées à la femme, ains distribuées et departies en plus grande mesure qu'a l'homme.

Quand la femme n'auroit que ce seul advantage par sus l'homme, qu'elle a esté faicte et formée en Paradis terrestre et l'hōme hors d'iceluy, ceste seule perfection surpasse toutes celles que pourroit auoir l'hōme, et est plusque suffisante pour clorre la bouche à tous les medisans et detracteurs du sexe foiminin. »

(De Marconville, Jean, *De la bonté et mauuaistié des femmes*, Paris, 1564, pp. 7b, 8.)

He follows these by another, also not original with him, namely that woman's superiority is proved by her inventive ability, for man has never been able to invent (or rather discover) anything of great worth.

« Mais quant nous venons à considerer plus exactement la singularité de leurs grands esprits, nous trouuons les graces celestes leur auoir esté plus excellentement octroïées qu'aux hommes. Car qui est l'homme qui ait iamais esté inuenteur de chose meilleure, pour l'aornement (sic) de l'esprit que sont les lettres les sciences et les loix, et que le froment, lanifice, et textrine, pour l'entretien du corps humain, et toutes-fois ce sont inuentions foeminins. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 13.)

In addition to this, he considers those women who have given themselves to the study of books and finds that they have not only equalled learned men, but because of the eminence of their learning they have surpassed the most famous philosophers of all times.

« Innumérables femmes se sont adonnées à la sciẽce d'icelles (lettres) et lecture des liures, si profondement que non seulement elles ont egallé les hommes doctes, mais aussi, en toute eminence de sçauoir, elles ont surpassé les plus sçauans Philosophes de leur temps. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 25.)

De Marconville gives as a proof of the fact that detractors of women should be quiet, and that they should cease refusing longer to admit the equality of the sexes, the situation that exists in the kingdom of the Troglodytes, a race of Ethiopia, the most barbarous of peoples, as well as the most remote from civilisation. But among that very people women hold a position of such importance that their decisions in any matter are unquestioned. In that kingdom it is considered a great crime to offend a woman, or to be displeasing to her in any respect (1).

In 1571 C. de Taillemont published his *Discours des champs faez à l'honneur et exaltation de l'amour et des dames*. In it he complains that women, due to the prejudices and error of men of preceding generations, have been denied the privilege of learning, as if they had been forbidden by God to learn how to distinguish good from evil.

« Mais, ...n'a esté jusques aujourd'huy le vouloir et consentement de noz ancestres et predecesseurs tant miserable et peruers, que meuz des erreurs d'autrui, ou de leur propre ignorance, n'ont permis aux esprits feminins gouter ce doux fruit de science et de doctrine ? comme si c'eust esté chose mal heureuse et interdite de Dieu qu'elles eussent sceu choisir la lumiere entre les tenebres et discerner le bien du mal. Mais que signifie qu'il y a encore de tels fols au môde, lesquels sans aucune consideration dient et maintiennent la femme ne pouoir ny deuoir sçauoir aucune chose ? Veritablement s'ils ne me veullent nier que Dieu l'ait faicte participante d'ame raisonnable côme l'homme, ie ne sçay pourquoy il ne luy seroit possible et licite de sçauoir aussi

(1) Cf. DE MARCONVILLE, *Traité*, p. 8.

bien qu'à luy. N'a elle sens, iugemēt et raison, l'esprit prompt et autant susceptible que l'homme ? ne voit-ton, par experience, le fruit qu'aucunes ont rapporté, et rapportēt encor à present du peu de doctrine que leur est permise : sinon toutesfois tant generalemēt que les hommes, n'en fault blâmer, et accuser que la coustume, qui est seulemēt, et selon le vulgaire, de sçauoir filer, et faire leur mesnage. »

(De Taillemont, C., *Discours des champs faez à l'honneur et exaltation de l'amour et des dames*, Paris, 1571, pp. 62b, 63.)

Ignorant men do not seem to realize, says he, that knowledge and virtue go hand in hand, and that both are as necessary for women as for men (1). Since these men cannot deny that God endowed both sexes with the power of reason, why do they refuse them the privilege of exercising that power ? (2) Even the small amount of learning that they have been allowed to have, has made it evident what they might become if men did not insist on confining the range of their activities to the duties of the household. One can only regret, is his conclusion, that so many persons of intelligence should be condemned by the tyranny of men to waste their time, and thus fail to reach the high level already attained by many women of past and present generations.

Following closely upon these two treatises which spoke favorably of the sex came *Le Printemps*, printed in 1572, a slanderous attack upon women. It uses as its principal arguments the fact that the Bible gives no record of women having been baptised, or admitted to the Eucharist ; that the Apostles forbade women to exercise any priestly rites ; that there is no record in the Scriptures that women are admitted to Paradise ; and last of all (a statement which recalls the simplicity of Agrippa), that there are no women angels, cherubim or seraphim.

(1) Cf. ERASMUS, Ch. II, p. 48.

(2) Cf. TAILLEMONT, p. 63.

« Lisons nous en l'escriture sainte que iamais femme ait esté honoree du saint baptesme, ou que nostre seigneur les ait voulu admettre au sacré mystere de la Cene ? Et suyuant cest exemple le plus excellēt des Apostres ne leurs a il pas expressement deffendu tout acte diuin, cōme prescher et enseigner, pour mōstrer quelles en sont indignes... Mais pour passer plus outre, auons nous ès saintes lettres aucū tesmoignage qu'il y aye des femmes en paradis ? et auez vous ouy iamais parler d'Angesses, de Cherubines, ou Seraphines. »

(IVER, Jacques, *Le Printemps*, Paris, 1572, pp. 102b, 103.)

Even the well-known leader of the Pléiade may at times be classed among the champions of women, for Ronsard in *La Franciade*, 1572, contrasts the sixteenth century when man, as a king, subjects women to his authority, considering them unfit to govern and created only to perform household tasks, with life in Lemnos when women were the magistrates, and men's only occupation was tilling the soil.

« Quoy, disois-tu, comme un superbe roy
L'homme contraint les femmes à sa loy ;
Non seulement les estime inutiles
A gouverner les sceptres et les villes,
Mais, sans nul tiltre et sans point commander,
Les fait filer, les laines escarder,
Ourdir et coudre et de paroles braves
En son foyer les tance comme esclaves
Qu'heureuse fust Lemnos, au temps passé,
Où le pouvoir des hommes fut cassé.
Par la finesse et prouesse des femmes,
Si que les noms des hommes estoient blames.
A labourer les terres ils seruoient,
Sans autre charge et les dames avoient
Le magistrat et seules la police,
Administroient le sceptre et la justice. »

(Ronsard, P. de, *Œuvres*, ed. Blanchemain, 8 vols., Paris, 1858, vol. III, pp. 144, 145.)

In the *Hippolyte* of Garnier, 1573, we have an example of a protest against marriage. Phèdre asserts that because

of the slavery of marriage women are prevented from loving the one whom they would otherwise choose. No animal, no matter how ferocious or how tame, has ever experienced such great servitude, for the animals may love freely without being charged with the crimes of incest or adultery, or without fear of a husband's wrath (1).

« Les hommes, nos tyrans, violant la Nature,
 Nous contraignent porter cette ordonnance dure,
 Ce misérable joug, que ny ce que les flots
 Enferment d'escaillé, ny ce qui vole enclos
 Dans le vuide de l'air, ce qui loge aux campagnes,
 Aux ombreuses forests, aux pierreuses montagnes,
 De cruel, de béning, de sauvage et privé,
 Plus libre qu'entre nous n'a jamais esprouvé.
 Là l'innocente amour s'exerce volontaire,
 Sans pallir sous les noms d'inceste et d'adultère,
 Sans crainte d'un mari, qui flambe de courroux
 Pour le moindre soupçon qu'ait son esprit jaloux.
 Et n'est-ce pas pitié qu'il faille que l'on aime
 A l'appetit d'un autre et non pas de soy-même ?
 En ce monde, il n'y a pire subjection,
 Que de se voir contraindre en son affection. »

(Garnier, R., *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Pinvert, Paris, 2 vols., 1923, vol. I, *Phèdre*, pp. 263) (2).

(1) Miss Pellett in her dissertation (*Gabriel Gilbert*) classes Garnier and Gilbert together as feminists because of the character given to *Phèdre* in the *Phèdre* of Garnier and the *Hyppolite* of Gilbert. In the latter play *Phèdre* says:

« Lors que le nœud d'Hymen joint les corps et les ames,
 Il lie esgallement les maris et les femmes ;
 Et pour l'un et pour l'autre on n'a fait qu'une loy.
 Les hommes peuvent-ils faillir impunément ?
 S'ils ont plus de raison ils pèchent doublement. »

(*Hyppolite*, III, 2,) cited in Pellett, E. J., *Gabriel Gilbert*, Johns Hopkins University Dissertation, 1927, ch. IV.

The characteristics given to *Phèdre* by these two dramatists were not, however, entirely original with them. Although *Phèdre* is not thus depicted in either Euripides or Seneca, Ovid (*Héroïde* IV) puts into her mouth the suggestion of a woman's right to freedom in love. Ovid, however, is not discussing the general question of a single or double of morality. Gilbert's first lines indicate that he is more of a feminist than Ovid, although the fact that they come from the lips of a woman who is not presented in a favorable light, rather diminishes the value of the evidence. Cf. Chinard, G., « Origines littéraires de René », *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, March, 1928 (pp. 288-302), p. 290.

(2) Cf. also Garnier's, *Bradamante*, II, 1, 2.

In return for the restraints which they place upon their wives, men are not even obliged to be faithful, for even when they have won the love of these wives they do not hesitate to forsake them for someone else.

« Or allez me louer la loyauté des hommes ;
 Allez me les vanter. O folles que nous sommes,
 O folles quatre fois, hélas ! nous les croyons,
 Et sous leurs feints soupirs indiscrettes ployons.
 Ils promettent assez qu'ils nous seront fidelles,
 Et que leurs amitez nous li'ront éternelles.
 Mais, ô deloyauté, les faulsaies n'ont pas
 Si tost nos simples cœurs surpris de leurs appas,
 Si tost ils n'ont déçu nos crédules pensées,
 Que telles amitez se perdent effacées,
 Qu'ils nous vont dédaignant, se repentant d'avoir
 Travaillé, langoureux, voulant nous décevoir. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 268, 69.)

Hippolyte, as would be expected, has nothing but invective for women. He designates them as inventors of all evil, destroyers of cities, palaces and empires, and gives as an example of infamous women Medea, whom he considers sufficient proof of the nature of the entire sex.

« Je ne sçaurois aimer vostre sexe odieux.
 Je ne puis m'y contraindre, il est trop vicieux.
 Il n'est méchanceté que n'invente une femme ;
 Il n'est fraude et malice où ne plonge son âme
 Nous voyons tous les jours tant de braves citez,
 Flambar, rouges de sang, pour leur lubricitez,
 Tant fumer de palais, tant de tours orgueilleuses
 Renverser jusqu'au pied pour ces incestueuses,
 Tant d'empires destruits, qui (possible) seroyent
 Encore en leur grandeur, qui encor fleuriroient !
 Je ne veux que Médée et ses actes infâmes
 Pour montrer quelles sont toutes les autres femmes. »

(GARNIER, *Phèdre*, pp. 287, 288.)

The poet Guillaume du Bartas says a few words in praise of women in the *Première semaine*. In his opinion man is incomplete without his mate ; he is a

wild beast, a hermit, an eccentric being and incapable, since when he is deprived of her he is deprived of intelligence, of love and feeling, and lives for himself alone.

« Cà, çà, tournez un peu votre œil et votre âme
Et ravis contemplez les beaux traits de la femme,
Sans qui l'homme çà bas n'est homme qu'à demi.
Ce n'est qu'un loup-garou du soleil ennemi,
Qu'un animal sauvage, ombrageux, solitaire,
Bizarre, frénétique, à qui rien peut plaire
Que le seul desplaisir : né pour soy seulement,
Privé de cœur, d'esprit, d'amour, de sentiment. »

(Quoted in Campaux, A., *La Question des femmes au XV^e siècle*, Paris, 1865, p. 29.)

Du Bartas could scarcely be called a feminist, however, for after all, his conception of woman is that she was created for man's pleasure and profit, and not for any worth of her own. He does not indicate that she should have any independent existence. God formed woman from man's own body, says du Bartas, in order that the union between them might be closer, more perfect and more lasting.

Dieu donc pour ne monstrier sa main moins libérale
Enuers le masle humain, qu'enuers tout autre masle,
Pour le parfait patron d'une sainte amitié,
A la moitié d'Adam ioint vne autre moitié,
La prenant de son corps, pour estreindre en tout aage
D'un lien plus étroit le sacré mariage. »

Salluste, Guillaume de, sieur du Bartas, *La Sepmaine, ou Creation du Monde*, Paris, 1588, pp. 569, 570.)

The one woman of those numbered among the poets of the century who defended her sex directly was Marie de Romieu, author of *Brief discours, que l'excellence de la femme surpasse celle de l'homme*, 1591. Her brother Jacques de Romieu, was also a poet, and it was he who inspired her, for he had published a satire against

women (1), to which she replied by this, the first of her poetic works. The discourse is preceded by a letter addressed to her brother, in which she censures him for the satire he had written and expresses her intention of proving to him her ability as a writer, although a member of the sex which he professed to despise.

In her discourse Marie de Romieu says that if women's courage, intelligence and virtue are considered, one would naturally praise the sex and deem it superior to the male, but there are always those spiteful and jealous souls who find that women are full of evil, inconstancy and error. She grants that some women have faults, but that none the less, honor is due to those of the sex who are the joy of the human race.

".....

Mais puis si nous venons à priser la valleur,
Le courage, l'esprit, et la magnificence,
L'honneur, et la vertu et toute excellence
Qu'on voit luire tousiours au sexe feminin,
A bon droit nous dirons que c'est le plus diuin.
Quelqu'un plein de despit, tout coléré de rage
Dira que ie fais mal de tenir tel langage,
Et dira que la femme est remplie de maux,
D'inconstance et d'erreur sur tous les animaux.
Quant à moy ie scay bien qu'entre nous fêmelettes
On peut humainement trouuer des fauteletes
Mais cela ne fait pas que ne soit deu l'honneur
A la femme qui est pleine de tout bonheur,
Chasse-mal, chasse-ennuy, chasse-dueil, chasse-peine
L'asseuré reconfort de la semence humaine. »

(Romieu, Marie de, *Op. cit.*, pp. 6, 6b.)

When it comes to proofs of the superiority of woman, Marie de Romieu has nothing new to offer. She employs the well-worn arguments of the material of her creation, and the credit that should be hers for having

(1) This satire has not been located as yet. It does not appear in his book, *Meslanges de poesies, où sont comprises les louanges du pays de Vivarais*, Lyon, 1584.

invented things (1). Here she goes so far as to say that women are the inventors of human knowledge.

Marie de Romieu is not content, as is evident from the passages quoted, to claim merely the equality of the sexes ; her desire is to prove the inferiority of man. Failure to recognize this fact in the past was due in her opinion to ignorance or lack of thought, and it is these evils which she is seeking to overcome by her outspoken defense of her sex.

Certainly it would be impossible to omit Montaigne's work when considering the precursors of feminism. It is difficult to decide what is his real opinion, for Montaigne varies somewhat in his statements about women. He considers them unfit to govern and incapable of receiving training in theology ; they should not be allowed to care for their children after they have reached legal age on account of women's imperfections and feeble intelligence (2) ; they have gifts equal to those of men ; they should be educated if they so desire in poetry, history and philosophy ; their claims to superiority should rest rather upon their beauty than their pedantic learning (3). These are the varying points of view to be found in the *Essais*. He can in no wise be called a feminist, since after all the ultimate aim of woman was, in his eyes, to please and make herself loved, and yet he does not belong among those who slander the sex. He is rather favorable than otherwise in his opinions.

Probably the passage in which Montaigne speaks most favorably of the sex is to be found in a letter to M^{me} de Coicy in which he says that men and women are equally endowed by nature, and that when the latter are free to act they equal men in any acts requiring strength, intelligence, courage, or virtue. It is true that in France, because of laws, customs and education, the position of women is decidedly inferior, and that they

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 6b, 9b.

(2) Cf. *Essais*, II, 8, p. 198.

(3) Cf. VILLEY, P., *Les Sources et l'évolution des essais de Montaigne*, Paris, 1909, pp. 474, 477.

suffer because of it (1). Yet nature, indignant at the injustice of men, has given women a chance to regain their rights through the sovereignty of their beauty, virtue and ability to please. An idea somewhat similar to part at least of the above is to be found in chapter five of the third book of *Essais*.

« Je dis que les masles et femelles sont iectez en mesme moule : sauf l'institution et l'usage, la difference n'y est grande. Platon appelle indifferemment les uns et les aultres à la société de toutes estudes, exercices, charges et vocations, guerrieres et paisibles, en sa republique, et le philosophe Antisthenes ostoit toute distinction entre leur vertu et la nostre. Il est bien plus aysé d'accuser un sexe que d'excuser l'autre. »

(Montaigne, M., *Essais*, Paris, Firmin-Didot, 1876, III, 5, p. 467.)

In his opinion, those women are very rare who should receive any other than the natural maternal authority over men. He feels that the French law which deprives women of the crown is just, and the very fact that this same condition applies in many other places seems to him a justification of it

« Il me semble ...qu'il naist rarement des femmes à qui la maistrise soit deue sur des hommes, sauf la maternelle et naturelle ; si ce n'est pour le chastement de ceulx qui par quelque humeur febvreuse, se sont volontairement soubmis à elles ; mais cela ne touche aulcunement les vieilles, dequoy nous parlons icy. C'est l'apparence de cette consideration qui nous a faict forger et donner pied si volontiers à cette loy... qui prive les femmes de la succession de cette couronne ; et n'est gueres seigneurie au monde où elle ne s'allegue comme icy, par une vray-semblance de raison qui l'auctorise. (2) »

(*Ibid.*, II, 8, p. 199.)

(1) Cf. DESCHANEL, E., *Le Bien qu'on a dit des femmes*, Paris, 1858, p. 118.

(2) This passage appeared in the edition of 1580. It would seem that Montaigne was unaware of the fact that upon the throne of a neighboring

Several times Montaigne speaks of the uselessness of knowledge without understanding. Knowledge cannot simply be sprinkled upon the mind ; it must become part of it, as dye does of a material. If its previously imperfect state is not improved by knowledge, of what avail is learning ? This combination of knowledge and understanding seems impossible for most women. Montaigne comes to his conclusion by citing the story of Francis, son of John V, and his fiancée Isabel, who was said not to be well educated, whereupon Francis said that a woman was sufficiently learned who knew the difference between her husband's doublet and his shirt (1). (Cf. Chrysale, *Les Femmes savantes*.)

In another essay he returns to the same idea — that women acquire facts without in any way relating them or making them part of themselves, so that they speak of learned things in a glib sort of fashion without really comprehending their significance. Here Montaigne seems decidedly hostile, for he is denying to women the ability to assimilate knowledge and make the proper use of it. When women apply themselves to the study of rhetoric, law and logic, it is due, says Montaigne, to the counsel of those men who desire thus to get them under their control (2). Sufficient should it be for them to charm us, rather than that they should seek to interpret learned books. Their grace and beauty are weapons sufficiently strong to prevail over even the school masters. Here Montaigne is again a precursor of Molière, for it is Clitandre's desire that a woman be cultured without sacrificing her femininity. (3)

« Les sçavants... font tousiours parade de leur magistère, et sement leurs livres par tout ; ils en ont en ce temps entonné si fort les cabinets et aureilles des

kingdom there was at that very time a woman, Elizabeth Tudor, whose conduct and ability as queen were a flat contradiction of his theory. Certainly no ruler, man or woman, could have more successfully guided English politics in those years than she did.

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, I, 24, p. 59.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, III, 3, p. 425.

(3) Cf. MOLIÈRE, *Les Femmes savantes*.

dames, que si elles n'en ont retenu la substance au moins elles en ont la mine : à toute sorte de propos et matiere, pour basse et populaire qu'elle soit, elles se servent d'une façon de parler et d'escrire nouvelle et sçavante, ...et alleguent Platon et saint Thomas aux choses ausquelles le premier rencontré serviroit aussi bien de tesmoing : la doctrine qui ne leur a peu arriver en l'ame, leur est demeuree en la langue. Si les bien nees me croient, elles se contenteront de faire valoir leurs propres et naturelles richesses ; elles cachent et couvrent leurs beaultez sous des beaultez estrangieres ; d'est grande simplesses d'estouffer sa clarté, pour luire d'une lumiere empruntée ; elles sont enterrees et ensevelies sous l'art... C'est qu'elles ne se cognoissent point assez ; le monde n'a rien de plus beau ; c'est à elles d'honorer les arts et de farder le fard. Que leur faut il, que vivre aymées et honorées ? elles n'ont et ne sçavent que trop pour cela ; il ne faut qu'esveiller un peu et reschauffer les facultez qui sont en elles. Baste, qu'elles peuvent, sans nous, renger la grace de leurs yeulx à la gayeté, à la severité et à la douceur, assaisonner un nenny de rudesse, de doute et de faveur, et qu'elles ne cherchent point d'interprete aux discours qu'on faist pour leur service ; avecques cette science, elles commandent à baguette, et regentent les regents et l'eschole. »

(*Ibid.*, III, 3, p. 425.)

If, however, women insist on study, Montaigne finds that poetry is a suitable subject for them to undertake; for it is subtle, frivolous and pleasant like themselves. Benefit could be also derived from history, from ethics and, to a certain extent, from philosophy which would enable them to endure some of the privations and hardships of life (1).

Montaigne's ideas concerning the ability of women to rule have already been mentioned. This problem is indirectly discussed by François Hotman in his *Franco-Gallia*, 1573. This is a political pamphlet written by a Protestant after the massacre of St. Bartholomew's

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, III, 3, p. 425.

Day. Naturally his aim was to prove that the Catholics were responsible for the massacre. This explains his bitterness towards Catherine de Medici. Hotman was highly regarded, both at home and abroad, for his political theories. He was even used as an authority by the Guises (without, of course, being mentioned by name).

In a chapter devoted to a consideration of the Salic Law (*Nulla hereditas portio de terra Salica ad mulierem venito*) he declares that

« Terram autem Salicam, Francorum Iureconsulti eam dicunt, quæ solius Regis est : & a lege Alodij distat, quæ subditos comprehendit : quibus datur per hanc legem rei alicuius liberum dominium, non exclusa Principis maiestate. »

(Hotman, F., *Francogallia*, Frankfort, 1586, p. 76.)

Elsewhere (chapter 26) he asks the question as to whether, if women are debarred by the Salic Law from inheriting the kingdom, they are not equally barred from acting as regents. His conclusion is that women, even if they are forced by circumstances to reign in place of another, have no authority to rule in their own right, and that such power has always come to them as a sort of accident (1).

Moreover, it would seem that history offers proof of the fact that the administration of women has only too frequently resulted in tragedy for the kingdom. Of these unhappy results of feminine administration Hotman gives numerous illustrations.

« Nam ei causam præbuisse superiorum aliquot temporum exempla videntur ; quibus constat, Regnum Franco galliæ a Reginis, præsertim viduis et regū vel puerorum vel absentium matribus administratum fuisse. In quibus haud scio an ullum ad muliebrem audacia insignius commemorari possit, quam illud reginæ Blancæ, Ludovici Transmarini matris, de qua posterius dicemus ; quæ Rege filis in Africam ad bellum gerendum profecto, summam sibi potestatem

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 200, 201.

non modo in Reip. sed etiam in Ecclesiarum et Episcopatum administratione asciuit ; quem ad modum ex veteribus quibusdam monumentis nuper in lucem editis cognosci potest : « nos charissimæ domine nostræ et matri Reginæ concessimus et voluimus, quod ipsa in hac nostræ peregrinationis absentia plenariam habeat potestatem recipiendi et attrahendi ad regni nostri negotia, quos sibi placuerit et amouendi quos viderit amouendos ; Baillinos etiam instituere valeat, castellanæ, forestarios et alios in servitium nostrum et regni nostri ministros ponere et amovere ; dignitates etiam et beneficia ecclesiastica vacantia conferre, fidelitates Episcoporum et Abbatum recipere et eis regalia restituere et eligendi licentium dare capitulis et conuentibus vice nostra. » ...Quod si maiorum monstrorum auctoritatem quærimus, extat insignis apud *Aimon lib. 4 c.* ubi de Brunechilde, Regina matre Childeberti regis commemorans ita loquitur; simul, inquit, quia Brunechildis summam regni sollicitudinem sibi reservare velle intellegebatur et primates Franciæ tanto tempore fœmines dominatui dedignabatur subiciri. ...Et profecto ita est, vt si quando regni procurationem apud maiores nostros mulieres adeptæ sunt, semper ea res miras in Rep. nostra tragædias, summa denique miserarium incendia excitatit. Cuius rei alienum videtur exempla quædam proponere. Dominata est quondam Chrothildis, Regina, mater Childeberti & Clotarij regum, quæ cum alterius filij nomine Chlodomeris demortui filios infano quodam amore prosequeretur, summam contentionem abhūit, vt nepotes remotis filiis in regiam dignitatem perducerentur. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 200-203.)

In other words Hotman is discussing in the chapter above cited two distinct questions : 1° the question of law, namely, whether, since women were barred by the Salic Law from inheriting the throne, they had the right to act as regents ; 2° the question of fact, namely, that certain women had held such power, as history could prove, and that always disaster had resulted (1).

(1) The long period during which Catherine de Medici controlled the French throne led to many discussions of the Salic Law. These found

Hotman certainly cannot be classed among those who are in favor of women. He chooses for his illustrations only those women who were by nature unfit to deal with the problems confronting them, and who therefore failed, and he entirely fails to take into account many who succeeded admirably in their efforts. It is a one-sided picture that he gives us, and its chief value to us lies in the fact that it proves its painter to be an anti-feminist.

In the works of two other women writers of the sixteenth century we find further examples of feminism. These were Madeleine Des Roches and her daughter, Catherine, who died at Poitiers in 1587 during an epidemic of plague. Catherine at the time of her death was already distinguished as a *pédante*, and she is spoken of as the *devancière* of M^{lle} de Gournay and Julie de Rambouillet (1). The volumes which were first published under the title of *Œuvres* in Paris in 1578 contain chiefly the work of Catherine.

In the *Secondes Œuvres*, Poitiers, 1585, there is an interesting dialogue between two fathers, Placide and

utterance in numerous pamphlets, one of which resembling Hotman's work in its point of view, appears in a collection of memoirs relating to the reign of Charles IX.

« Je pourroi ici monstrier que par nostre loi Salique les femmes ont aussi peu de droit de vouloir gouuerner ce royaume qu'en prétendre la succession ; que quand le contraire s'est fait, ç'a esté par vn abus tout manifeste, dont nous auons tousiours porté la peine ; et que l'importance du danger public ne gist point en ce qu'une femme est appelee Roine, ou porte vne couronne, mais en ce que le plus souuent elle gouerne tout à l'appetit des immoderees passions qui la peuuent emporter, et du premier qui a la subtilité de se mettre par quelques services en sa bonne grace, comme nos histoires le tesmoignent. Mais prenons le cas que les regences des femmes ayent lieu en ce royaume, et que quelques malheureux exemples doivent estre tirez en consequence ; est-il possible de se declarer regent ou regente soi-mesme. »

(*Discours merueilleux de la vie, actions et deportemens de Catherine de Medicis Roine mere, Mémoires de l'estat sous Charles IX*, vol. III, p. 471. Lanson, *Manuel*, no. 2482 gives Henri (II) Estienne and I. Gentillet as authors of this pamphlet, and cites also with it (no. 2490) HOTMAN, F., *Pamphlet justificatif de la « Franco-Gallia »*. This latter pamphlet has not been located.

(1) Cf. HOEFER, *Biographie générale*, Des Roches.

Severe, who discuss their daughters. The latter is very dissatisfied with his daughter's behaviour and seeks advice from Placide whose daughter is most exemplary in every respect. But when he learns that Placide permits her to read such authors as Plutarch and Seneca his amazement and consternation are unfeigned. In his opinion it is profanation for a girl even to speak the names of such authors. Placide replies that women are more worthy of instruction than men because they are « plus sobres, chastes et paisibles » (1). Severe angrily objects that the « imbecillité de ces petites Bestioles » should not be compared to the great intelligence of men, and further criticises Placide because he allows his daughter complete freedom (2).

But Placide's retort is that when women have been properly guided and developed by wise reading they will desire to do nothing which is unreasonable. You may call women « sottes ou sages » as you will, says he to Severe, but you should at least allow them to read. In that way their knowledge is increased, and if they have to be kept at home they will at least not be idle.

«mais estant guidées par les bonnes lettres, elles ne voudront rien faire, qui ne soit raisonnable... Soit que les femmes vous semblent sottes, ou sages : pourtant ie serois d'aduis qu'on leur permist touiours de lire, afin que les vnes se pussent diminuer la sottise, les autres accroistre la sagesse, par le moien des liures, qui leurs seront tres necessaires, quãd ce ne seroit que pour les retenir solitaires dans la maison, sans estre oysiues. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 36b.)

Severe's reply is typical of the class that he represents, those who think woman devoid of all real intelligence, and whose greatest aversion is the *pédante*.

» O quel mal-heur de voir vne femme scauante !... C'est vn monstre... et iamais ne conseilleray aux Hommes de les rechercher... »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 36b, 37.)

(1) Cf. DESROCHES, C. et M., *Les Secondes Œuvres*, Poitiers, 1585, p. 36.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

When Placide inquires if his objection to the *savante* is due to the fact that his wife belongs to that class, Severe answers that she is merely « une grosse beste » who doesn't even know how to manage her household affairs. In his opinion it is much more important that she should learn that than to spend her time reading. He finishes by saying « Il ne luy faut autre Docteur que ma voix » (1).

Placide replies that she could learn many details of household management if her husband were to require her to read the *Ménagerie* of Xenophon. But Severe refuses to admit the value of books, even if such necessary information may be found within. If he were to find her reading, says he, she would be made to learn that it was her business to handle a distaff rather than a book (2). His preference would also be for the ignorant woman, for the learned woman becomes arrogant.

«Les femmes ne doiuent iamais étudier. Je sçay que les lettres sont entierement inutiles aux femmes..
 J'aimerois mieux vue femme simple, qu'une qui voudroit subtiliser ses opinions. Aiant appris ce que vous dites elles s'estiment trop fortes. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 37b.)

However, after a long discussion of the problem, and after further arguments had been advanced by Placide in favor of the education of women, Severe finally consents to permit his wife and daughters to read the Bible, but nothing else. This does not satisfy Placide, who says that there should be no restrictions on their reading, and that they should even be permitted to study law, a very useful subject for them to know (3).

To this Severe replies sarcastically that if women are to study theology and jurisprudence, they should also be taught medicine in order that they may be familiar with all the branches of learning studied by men. He

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

(3) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

then reiterates his opinion that women thus educated will be proud and disdainful of their husbands.

« Les hommes font profession de trois sortes de sciences, avec les quelles ilz pratiquent, de la Theologie, la Jurisprudence, et la medecine. Je suis d'aduis que vous apreniez aux femmes encore le moyen de guerir les maladies, afin que de tous ars elles soyent en commun avec que nous... Celles qui scavent tant de belles choses communémēt sont glorieuses, et dédaignent leurs maris, faisant des sufisantes. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 38, 38b.)

Severe ends with four lines of verse in which the husband is exhorted to shun the learned woman who would probably scorn him, and to choose rather the ignorant wife who will docilely allow her husband to rule the household (1).

After listening to some more of Placide's arguments, Severe is apparently convinced that women have a right to education and decides to let his daughter study as she will — *provided* that his wife does not object. This may be a means of escape for Severe, who may not be as convinced as he wished Placide to believe. At any rate his wife feels that education is not necessary to make a girl either wise or virtuous, and she is unwilling for her daughter to be more learned than she is herself. The ultimate aim of every well-bred girl is to marry, says this mother, but more knowledge will not help her to marry any sooner, and will therefore profit her not at all.

« Je delibere changer la nourriture de ma fille Iris, pour luy faire aprêdre quelque bien... pourue que sa mère ne si oppose, car elle m'a dit autresfois parlant des filles mieux aprises. Que soit il a vne femme d'entendre les letres, et la musique. Je n'ay point sceu tout cela et suis aussi sage qu'une autre. Je ne veus pas que ma fille en sache plus que moy. De quoy luy pourroit il profiter ? seroit elle plustost mariée ? »

(*Ibid.*, p. 41b.)

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

In this dialogue between the two fathers it is quite reasonable to believe that Placide represents the point of view of the *dames* Des Roches, and Severe's ideas those which they are attacking and attempting to disprove. There is nothing original in their work, but it is interesting as presenting the opinion of two women who were themselves highly intelligent, well thought of in the society of Poitiers and who belonged to that group known as the *femmes savantes* at a time when it had not yet become as strong as when Molière produced his famous satire.

There were still authors at this period whose works recalled the *Querelle des femmes* by both title and subject matter. One of these is *la Guerre des masles contre les femelles* of the seigneur de Cholières. It is composed of a series of dialogues between defenders and opponents of women. In one we find two men, Nicogène, the opponent of women, and Ginecophile, their champion. To the statement made by the former that his wife is of the same stuff as other women, and that since she is wicked all the rest must be like her, the latter replies that since Eve was created of more perfect material than Adam, and since he was guilty of the original sin, women should not to be thus maligned, for they are superior beings.

« *Nicogène.* — Il s'entend bien, d'autât que ie fais estat, que ma Xantippe est de mesmes paste que les autres, et puisqu'elle m'est de mauvaise affaire, que les autres ne sôt gueres meilleures.

Ginecophile. — Ne sçaez vous pas, que et Adam et Eve sont composez d'une mesme matiere, et q̃, s'il faut subtiliser par les folies de la raison humaine, celle dont fut bastie Eve estoit plus espurée et parfaite que celle, de la composition d'Adam, ou finalement que s'il y a quelque chose à redire, la faute en doit materialement estre plustot donné à Adam qu'à Eve. »

(De Cholières, *La Guerre des masles contre les femelles*, Paris, 1588, pp. 3, 4.)

But Nicogène feels that it is very necessary to subjugate women as much as possible because of their imperfections. Legislative bodies have recognized the wisdom

of this, and have passed laws to that effect forbidding them to hold public office, and placing them under the control of their husbands, because they lack sufficient wisdom and prudence to be able to direct their own lives.

« *Nicogène*. — Me nierez vous donc maintenant qu'il ne soit trop plus que nécessaire qu'on abaisse les femmes le plus bas qu'il sera possible, puisque leur naturel est si imparfait, leurs meurs si mal assaisonnées, que les Législateurs ont voulu que la femme fut en tutelle perpétuelle, ou sous la puissance du mary, et qu'elles fussent forcloses des dignitez et charges publiques...

Nicogène. — Mais vous oubliez le principal à sçavoir la raison, sur laquelle les anciens Législateurs se fondoient, pour tenir la bride, si roide à ces femmes. Ne sçavez vous pas que c'estoit pour autant qu'elles ne sont assez sages, prudentes et aduises, pour se sçavoir conduire. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 20, 31).

Ginecophile's reply is that the women of that day had proved themselves able to act alone, and had freed themselves from some of the swaddling bands that had bound them in the past. Such independent action would seem to prove that women are as wise and prudent as men, — if not more so. Even legislatures have come to recognize such facts, says he, and have given women more liberty.

Like many other enemies of the sex, *Nicogène* declares that women have no business in public life. They are so unsteady and so badly fitted for it that they would ruin everything. He feels that those legislators who have deprived them of the whip-hand have manifested great wisdom.

« *Nicogène*. — La femme si elle auoit à tenir la bride du commandement public, elle est si volage, si foible, et mal née à telle charge, que ses affections la transporteroient tout à rebours du droit, si biẽ qu'elle mettroit tout le monde en cõbustiõ et si elles mesmes pourroit payer l'intérêt de son outrecuydee folie, par vn Phaëtonique soubresaut, qu'elle feroit. Tressage-

ment donques et au profit des femmes ont fait les
Legislateurs, qui leur ont osté le foïet des poings. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 61b.)

Another champion of women portrayed by our author is Boniface, who praises them for their skill, intelligence and virtues. They have been considered worthy to hold peerages in the past, and to have the same prerogatives as men. To queens have always been given the same privileges as to kings, a fact which proves that one sex is equal to the other (1).

In another of de Cholières' works, *De la puissance maritale*, one of the speakers, Sylvestre, expresses the commonly-held opinion that women should be controlled by their husbands, sanction for such control being found in the divine law, the laws of nature and those observed by the majority of nations (2). To this Barthelemy replies that there have likewise been nations in which women have exercised the controlling hand, while the husbands looked after the household duties. (Cf. kingdom of Lemnos, mentioned by Ronsard).

It is rather rare to find in the sixteenth century a man demanding that women be granted specific political privileges. Such an one has already been mentioned in the person of Agrippa, but another, and more important feminist may be placed beside him. The scholar Henri (II) Estienne was at one time present at a university assembly at Strasbourg, presided over by the rector, in which were discussed a number of theses proposed by the rector himself. Among others they argued as to whether or not women should take part in public affairs, and if they ought to be admitted to councils of state. One of the participants in the discussion wished to deny them these privileges, and invoked in support of his attitude the laws of Justinian. The rector did not express his opinion openly, but seemed to sympathise with this adversary of woman. When it came to Estienne's turn to speak

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 84b.

(2) DE CHOLIÈRES, *Œuvres*, 2 vols., Paris, 1587, vol. I, pp. 112, 113, 116, 117.

he excused himself on the grounds of insufficient time to prepare his arguments.

However, immediately after the termination of the assembly he set himself to work to write his views in a pamphlet entitled *Carmen de senatulo foeminarum, magnum senatui virorum levamentum atque adiuumentum allaturo*, 1596. He treats his subject very seriously and refrains from any amusing anecdotes, malicious allusions or anything which might cause him to be accused of a frivolous attitude. Women have no cause of complaint against him, for not only does he defend them against the invective of the misogynists, but he also demands for them political rights of which the women of the sixteenth century had probably never dreamed.

Summarized briefly, here are his ideas. Women, although they should not seek for public offices, ought not to be entirely shut out from the state councils, for certain women are sufficiently wise in judgment and possessed of an experience wide enough to render them capable of giving their opinion even on grave and weighty questions. In many cases men could well profit by their views. He proposes therefore the formation of an assembly of selected women (*senatulum*) which should be consulted in case of need by the masculine senate. To prove the feasibility of such a plan he enumerates a long list of women who had distinguished themselves in history by their learning and their wisdom as counselors of kings or statesmen, such as Penelope, Aspasia, Theodora and Semiramis. He forestalls the objection of those who might say that politics are beyond the grasp of a woman's intelligence by stating that women had mastered (and were still doing so) subjects much more difficult, such as philosophy and mathematics, and he enumerates those who have excelled in these branches of knowledge. What a paradox it is, says he, to acknowledge that women's intelligence is capable of poetry, eloquence, philosophy and mathematics and then to refuse them only the right of participation in government !

Estienne never goes so far as to say that the minds of men and women are the same. Rather, their very limitations, and certain qualities which they alone possess,

make them valuable auxiliaries to men in affairs of state. A woman's intuition may give her an idea that would never occur to the mind of a man. Cleverness is much more a characteristic of the female than of the male sex. Women are frequently accused of frivolity and fickleness, but these, says he, are weaknesses of young women, and it is only women matured by years and experience who are to be admitted to the *senatulum*. Men who are guilty of fickleness, and who change their opinions frequently, are just as numerous as women.

Women may also be accused of gossiping and chattering, and these things might indeed weaken the value of their judgments, but it does not necessarily follow that this value is entirely lost. Moreover there are two sorts of chatter, that which does nothing but amuse, and that which reveals things which would have been kept secret. Both men and women are equally guilty of the latter type, says Estienne.

Above all, it is the sympathy, moral delicacy and gentleness which women can manifest that renders them valuable. They are too conscientious to break an oath once taken. Against those absurd and barbarous customs which are frequently called law, they will plead the cause of humanity, and for that cause, says he, they will be ready and willing to sacrifice much (1). Men will be charmed by their eloquence and touched by their patience, until finally they will be forced to yield to the senate of women. Estienne, as has already been indicated, probably owes his idea to Erasmus and Plato. (Cf. Philaminte's assembly in *les Femmes savantes* and also Chappuzeau, *l'Académie des femmes*.)

In some of the *Vies des dames galantes* (written between 1584-1599, published 1665) of Brantôme we find another manifestation of the *esprit gaulois* or *esprit des fabliaux*. One might think that Brantôme was exacting a single standard of morality when he says that husbands who are guilty of infidelity should not blame their wives for committing the same sin, since it was they who set the

(1) Cf. CLÉMENT, L., « *Le Carmen de Senatulo feminarum d'Henri Estienne* », R. H. L., I, 1894, pp. 441-445.

example. It is more probable that Brantôme, instead of justifying the infidelity of the wife, is ridiculing both deceived and deceivers (1).

« Or, j'ay veu plusieurs blasmer grandement aucuns de ces maris jaloux et meurtriers, d'une chose ; que si leurs femmes sont putains, eux-mesmes en sont cause. Car, comme dit saint Augustin, c'est une grande folie à un mary de requerir chasteté à sa femme, lui estant plongé au borbier de paillardise ; et en tel estat doit estre le mary, qu'il veut trouver sa femme. »

(De Bourdeille, abbé de Brantôme, *Œuvres*, 8 vols., Paris, 1787, vol. III, p. 32.)

Brantôme may be said to speak in favor of women when he declares that many of them, because they were courageous and ambitious, inspired their husbands or lovers to noble deeds, and aroused them from the languor or indifference in which they were living. Among such women were to be found Agnes Sorel who incited Charles VIII to conquer his kingdom when she told him of the prophecy that she was to be loved by one of the most valiant and courageous kings of Christendom ; the wife of Bertrand du Guesclin, who urged her husband to return to his warlike exploits because since his marriage people had ceased to speak of his valor ; the duchess of Anjou, whose ambition and urging led finally to her husband's being crowned king of Naples ; Isabelle of Lorraine who had conquered the kingdoms of Sicily and Naples while her husband was a prisoner of Charles of Burgundy (2). Likewise he tells us that most of the exploits which we praise in men have been performed in order to win praise and favor from the women they loved (3), so that the men cannot truly credit themselves with such noble deeds. Women have been known to forsake men

(1) Cf. « Range toy au devoir, et ayme d'un bon zele
Ta femme si tu veux qu'elle te soit fidèle,
Souvent le desloyal par sa desloyauté
Prouoque sa Compagne à infidélité. »
Rouspeau, Yves, *Quatrains du bonheur et malheur en mariage*, Pons, 1593.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, III, pp. 450-52.

(3) Cf. *Ibid.*, III, p. 455.

of wealth who were pusillanimous (1), as well as to marry those who were penniless because they loved them for their valor. Women have also shown that they themselves are capable of valorous acts in time of need. As a proof Brantôme relates the story of three bands of Sienese women who defended their city in its revolt against the Empire. So worthily did they fight that all of the male citizens of the city came to their aid (2). He gives other illustrations similar to this — as, for example, the women of La Rochelle who even helped build the fortifications of the city, (3) and those of Carthage who cut off their hair in order to furnish strings for the bows of their husbands (4).

There have been women, says Brantôme, who did not waste time weeping after the death of their husbands, but who rather, like Zenobia, took charge of the empire (5), led the army and took their husbands' place in every particular. Other similar women are cited, such as the queen of Hungary (6), the princess of Montfort, Isabella, wife of Edward II of England, Eleanor of Aquitaine (7). Still others have manifested great courage in the face of suffering and death.

Brantôme has another volume devoted to the *Vies des dames illustres* in which he speaks of many of the women renowned in preceding ages or among his contemporaries. He uses them as examples of what women can really accomplish in the fields of learning and politics. Catherine de Medici is mentioned because during the absence of her husband in Germany she was constituted regent of the kingdom (8), and discharged her duties so well that she was able to assist him with money and men ; Mary Stuart, because at the age of thirteen she had pronounced a discourse in Latin before all the court. In this

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, III, pp. 458, 459.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 467, 468.

(3) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 472, 473.

(4) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 475.

(5) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 476, 479.

(6) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 479-484.

(7) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 499-507.

(8) Cf. *Ibid.*, II, *Discours* 2.

oration she sustained the theory that it was fitting for women to learn languages and the liberal arts (1). Mary is mentioned also because she regularly set apart time each day for study and because she was an able poet. Marguerite of France, the most eloquent of women, is chosen because she was able to carry on a conversation in Latin with the archbishop of Warsaw without the aid of an interpreter (2), because of her skill in the composition of letters and because she was considered by her mother, Catherine de Medici, to be as capable of reigning as any man (3). Marguerite de Valois is worthy of note because of her great learning which distinguished her among the scholars of her brother's court, and because of such literary works as *Les Marguerites de la Marguerite des princesses* (4), and her pastorals. Marguerite, duchess of Savoy, is included because she was so learned that she was known as the Pallas Athena of France, and interested herself always in all forms of learning. Many other examples are given which would seem to prove that Brantôme recognized fully the varied abilities of women and approved of their usage.

It is a far cry from such illustrations to a theological argument over the question of woman's humanity, but at the same time that Brantôme was compiling the *Discours* just cited, such a problem was arousing vigorous discussion.

One can go back as far as Aristotle and find the theory advanced that nature forms woman only when the material used is so imperfect that she cannot succeed in creating men. We have already seen that Castiglione thought that nature, whose tendency is always to create that which is perfect, would naturally create men ; so that when women appear they are to be regarded as contrary to her will, and considered to have been produced by accident. It would seem almost incredible that men had ever considered the question that women were human beings, and yet we find that it was discussed in the

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, *Discours* 3.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, *Discours* 5.

(3) Cf. Montaigne's opinion, ch. III, p. 126.

(4) Cf. *Discours* VI, article 6.

Council of Macon, 585, (composed of Frankish bishops, and called « une sorte de concile générale de la nation franque ») (1) and decided favorably only when the bishop who had claimed that a woman could not be called *homo* in the complete sense of the word, was reprimanded by the council (2). It is possible that while reading the story of this discussion, Acidalius Valens may have conceived the idea for his book entitled, *Dissertation paradoxale, où l'on essaye de prouver que les femmes ne sont pas des créatures humaines*, 1595 (3).

In this treatise Valens says that if women are not human beings Christ did not die to redeem them, and they will not have eternal life. In neither the Old nor New Testament is woman qualified as *man*. If she had partaken of man's nature, the Holy Spirit would have qualified her thus. It therefore follows that she cannot be of his nature, and whoever says she is claims to know more than God.

« ...Par une consequence necessaire Jesus Christ n'est point mort pour elles, et elles n'ont point de part au salut éternel.

On ne voit ni dans l'ancien ni dans le nouveau Testament, que la femme soit qualifiée ou appelée homme, et certainement si la femme étoit de la nature de l'homme le Saint-Esprit lui auroit donné cette qualification en quelque endroit. Or, il ne lui a jamais donné ce nom, donc elle n'est point de la nature de l'homme, et quiconque la qualifie telle veut en sçavoir sur cela plus que Dieu même. »

(Meunier du Querlon, trans., *Problème sur les femmes*, Amsterdam, 1744, pp. 18, 20.)

(1) Hefele, C. J., *Histoire des conciles d'après les documents originaux*, 8 vols., Paris, 1907-1721, III, I, p. 208.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 211.

(3) This scholar of Brandenburg denied authorship of this treatise which he considered as childish. Others have claimed that he was merely its editor. Valens denies all connection with it, and in his letters says that it had been current long before his day and was probably composed in Poland. Cf. MEUNIER DE QUERLON, trans. *Problème sur les femmes*, Amsterdam, 1744, *Préface*, pp. 12, 13. It is, however generally attributed to him. (Cf. BRUNET, *Manuel du libraire*, vol. II, *Disputatio periucunda*.)

God, since he is omniscient, certainly knew when he created man that he was also going to make woman. Therefore, if he had intended to create her in the nature of man he would not have said « Let us make man », but « Let us make men ». The fact that he spoke thus in the singular is effective proof, according to Valens, that woman is not of the nature of man.

« Quand Dieu voulut créer Adam, il avait en même temps dessein de créer la femme, ou il sçavoit du moins qu'il formeroit la femme, puisqu'il sçait tout : s'il eût voulu qu'elle fût de la nature de l'homme ou d'Adam, il n'auroit point dit *faisons l'homme*, en parlant au singulier ; mais faisons des hommes. Or, comme il ne parle qu'au singulier, la parole exprime de Dieu forme une preuve invincible que Dieu n'a point du tout prétendu que la femme fût de la même nature que l'homme et que dans la création de nos premiers parens il n'a eu dessein de former et n'a effectivement formé qu'un seul homme, et non pas deux hommes. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 27, 28.)

But there is an even more conclusive proof, — God in forming man created him in his own image, and woman was not thus created (1).

It is useless to claim, as some have done, that woman partakes of man's nature on the basis that the Bible promises Christ to the posterity of Adam, and that she is numbered among that posterity. Nor is the claim that she is saved because it is she who gives birth to men of any avail. If one examines the Bible, one finds clearly enumerated the descendants of Adam ; nowhere, on the contrary, is there any genealogy of women ; thus the posterity of Adam is composed solely of men. A girl, although born before her brothers, is not spoken of in the Scriptures as the first born, — an additional proof for Valens that women do not partake of the nature of men.

« Vous venez d'avancer des propositions qui sont entièrement contre vous. L'une est que le Christ a été faite aux descandans du premier homme, elle a donc été faite aux femmes qui sont partie de sa postérité.

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

L'autre proposition est que la femme est sauvée par la génération. Si elle peut être sauvée par cette voye, elle participe donc à la nature humaine... Le dénombrement de cette postérité (d'Adam) est fait expressément dans les Livres Saints... Mais on ne trouve en nul endroit la généalogie des femmes, leur origine est incertaine, et l'on ne voit pas trop d'où elles sortent. Ainsi la posterité d'Adam se réduit uniquement aux hommes, et cela est d'autant plus évident, qu'aucune fille dans l'Écriture Sainte, quoique née avant ses freres, n'est honorée du nom de première née de la famille. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 45, 46.)

Neither can the Virgin be offered as a proof of the dignity and worth of women, for she was elevated to the rank of men when the angel saluted her as « blessed among all women » and not at any preceding time. Her elevation was due to the special favor of God and not to anything inherent in her nature. She is called « blessed among women » because, having been elevated to the nature of man, she possessed a prerogative not held by other women.

« Marie a été élevée à l'ordre des hommes, mais par une grace spéciale et non par sa propre nature... En effet les paroles que l'Ange adresse à la mere du Christ sont formelles. « Je vous salue Marie pleine de grace, vous êtes benite entre toutes les femmes. » Pourquoi dit-il « benite entre toutes les femmes ? » Si ce n'est parce qu'elle étoit élevée à la nature de l'homme, prérogative que n'ont pas les autres femmes. En effet on ne lit nulle part que Dieu ait donné une âme à la femme. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 59.)

Finally, woman is lower than man and does not partake of his nature, because nowhere is there record that God gave her a soul (1). Valens is the first author to deny specifically that woman is not equally endowed with men as far as immortality is concerned.

Meunier de Querlon adds to his translation of the work of Valens another very curious treatise which is anonymous, and which he says appears to have been recently

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

written (1). It is evident that the second work was inspired by the first, and particularly by the statement that women have no souls.

In this treatise, which is entitled *Essai sur l'âme des femmes*, the author begins by stating that not only does he class women among human beings, but he also grants them a soul. He then proceeds to prove that the soul of woman differs from that of man in that it is not immortal. This can be proved, says he, from the story of creation. Man was created first and made master of all. God then created woman to perpetuate the race and aid man. She was therefore created solely for man, and is necessary only to his physical existence.

« Je n'exclue point les femmes de la nature humaine, je leur accorde même une âme. Mais je prétends démontrer... que cette âme n'est pas immortelle.

L'Histoire de la création de l'homme et de la femme prouve incontestablement que l'âme de l'homme est seule immortelle.

L'homme seul fut créé d'abord, tout ce qui l'environnoit lui étoit soumis... Dieu créa alors la femme pour perpétuer la race d'Adam et pour l'aider... et comme Dieu avoit créé l'homme pour lui, il créa la femme pour l'homme. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 81.)

That women were made for the pleasure and entertainment of men is to be seen in those qualities which are characteristic of the sex ; a love of colors, the ability to flatter, and skill in light conversation. This raises them above the level of the animals. They do not, however, possess sufficient intelligence to enable them to write theological treatises ; theirs is limited rather to the composition of verses. They are lacking in judgment and highly imaginative. Since they were created only to keep men from boredom, it would have been useless to endow them with those qualities which men find in their equals. It is true that there are some unusually intelligent women, but even these are incapable of grasping those higher truths which are attained only by

(1) Cf. *Préface*, p. 16. This is probably the work of Simon Geddicus. Cf. Brunet, Manuel, II, *Disputatio periucunda*

men (1). Their very limitations in judgment prove that they were not made to elevate themselves to God.

Our author then reaches the most interesting point in his demonstration, for he seeks to prove why the soul of woman is not immortal. Since she was created only for man's pleasure, she will cease to be at the end of the world, because the purpose for which she was created will no longer exist. If she no longer exists it proves that her soul is not immortal. But the soul plasm of woman is after all valuable, and not to be wasted. Therefore, the author conceives the ingenious theory of a sort of transmigration of soul material from woman to woman until the end of the world. His idea perhaps came to him from Gratien du Pont whom he cites as authority for the statement that Adam at the resurrection is to arise perfect and complete ; wherefore Eve, having originally been a rib, would cease to be a woman and would resume her primary function. In similar fashion, all other women representing Eve, and all other men Adam, women would cease to exist. He grants that the soul of the Virgin is immortal, but says that God could give her immortality without being obliged to bestow it upon others of her sex. Therefore one has no right to conclude that women have immortal souls merely from belief in the immortality of the Virgin (2). This treatise is one of the most curious that was examined.

Traces of the influence of the question of women are less numerous in the sixteenth century theatre than in other forms of literature, yet even there are to be found ideas about their merits or demerits. Two of the tragedies of Montchrestien offer the frequently stated conception that women are the cause of all evil. In the first, *Sophonisbe*, 1596, which reappeared as *la Cartaginoise* in 1601, we find Scipio as the mouthpiece of the adversaries of women. He finds the whole sex to be detestable, ever ready to produce trouble since the moment when Pandora and her box first appeared. Women are responsible for the errors of indiscreet youth and prudent old age ; and their violent and cruel spirits are always

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 82, 83, 84.

(Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 85. 94.

plotting wicked acts. (Cf. Hippolyte's statement in Garnier's *Hippolyte*, ch. IV, p. 122.)

Scipion :

« O sexe detestable, embusche de douleur !
Tousiours tu nous produis quelque nouveau malheur.
Si Pandore iamais ne fust entrée au monde,
On n'eust connu les maux dont sa tasse est feconde.
Tout ennui, tout discord, tout meurtre vient par toy
Tu romps comme il te plaist les saintcs nœuds de la foy ;
Tu poussees à tout mal l'indiscrete ieunesse ;
Tu desbauches en fin la prudente vieillesse ;
Ton esprit violent, cruel, iniurieux,
Tousiours tousiours medite aux actes furieux. »

(Montchrestien, A., *Les Tragédies*, ed. Petit de Julleville, Paris, 1891, Act. IV, p. 145.)

In *la Reine d'Escosse*, 1601, Elizabeth, speaking of Mary, says that the opponents of her sex might well say that it was vindictive, cruel, wicked and double-dealing if they were to judge it by Mary's actions. No one could ever be able to make such statements of *her*, for she had always brought credit to the sex, and women who lived under her control would never have reason to complain of her as an unjust, tyrannical, or bloodthirsty ruler.

Reine (parlant de Marie) :

« Mon sexe qui de moy tire tant d'auantage,
N'en pourroit recevoir que vergoigne et dommage ;
On le blasonneroit cruel, vindicatif,
Meschant, double, ialoux, cauteleux et craintif ;
Sanguinaire, imposteur, artisan de mensonges,
Inventeur de malice, et controuueur de songes,
Cameleon venteux, suiet au changement,
Prenant toutes couleurs, fors le blanc seulement.
Les femmes que le sceptre a mis sous ma puissance
Ne se tiendroient iamais de dire en mon absence ;
O cruel deshonneur de nostre sexe humain !
Tu ne deurois tenir en ta sanglante main
Le sacré gouvernail de ceste Isle fameuse
Qui ceint de tous costez la grand' mer escumeuse. »

(Montchrestien, *La Reine d'Escosse*, p. 86.)

These plays offer very little that would decide as to Montchrestien's idea of women, and more particularly the latter one. Elizabeth's words are in harmony with her character, as well as with what the historical background, plot and situation would demand, and so could not be interpreted as the opinion of the dramatist.

The theory has already been mentioned that it was perfectly excusable for a woman to have a lover if her husband could not offer her as much pleasure or as great charm as she could find elsewhere (1). This same idea is found in the work of Alessandro Piccolomini, translated into French by Marie de Romieu under the title of *Instruction pour les jeunes dames, dans laquelle elles sont apprises comme il faut se bien gouverner en amour*, Lyons, n. d. and Paris, 1583. In it one woman seeks to persuade another to have a lover, and teaches her many tricks in order that she may conceal her infidelity from her husband. According to the first woman, she should always allow her husband to believe (and should always act so that he would have no reason to think otherwise) that she loves no one else but himself, but she should give her heart to another if he gives her more happiness. Why should a girl, who cannot endure her husband's moods and manners, submit herself to him if she finds some one else more in harmony with her tastes (2). There should be spiritual as well as physical satisfaction in marriage. Therefore if one is tied to a person whose disposition causes continual discord, it is wise to seek the love of some one who will serve as a recompense for the sufferings one is forced to undergo with the legal mate.

« M. — Je vous ay dit, ma fille, qu'elle se doit tellement conduire que le mary ayt opinion et assurance certaine d'estre aymé seul, mais elle doit secrettement auoir son cueur, là où il est beaucoup mieulx logé. Ainsi ie vous dis encore qu'avec les maris il suffist faire semblant d'aimer et il se contentent de cela...

M. — Ma fille vous feriez tort à vostre mary, si vous

(1) Cf. ch. III, pp. 82, 83.

(2) Cf. *L'Heptaméron*.

luy faisiez des cornes de sorte qu'il s'en aperceust, mais s'il n'en sçait rien, il n'y a point de mal. O vrayment il feroit beau veoir, s'il aduenoit qu'une Damoiselle s' (?) enconstrast vn mary, de qui elle ne peust souffrir l'humeur et les complexions, et qu'elle fust si sottte de n'y pourueoir, trouuant moyen de s'accoster de quelqu'un duquel les qualitez et naturel vinssent à symboliser avec ses pensées. Car en mariage, si l'esprit ne reçoit quelque cõtètement d'ailleurs, tout y est si froid et mal plaisant que c'est grand pitié, et au contraire, si la belle Damoiselle est soulagee de quelque amour bien gentille qui la contente elle aisie doucement les incommodez de mariage.

M. — Il y a un bon et prompt remede (à l'alliance de deux personnes de mœurs differentes et contraires de naturel) qui est de s'addonner à l'amour d'un qui puisse recompenser le déplaisir qu'on a avec un mary. »

(Piccoluomini, A., *Instruction pour les jeunes dames*, trans., Marie de Romieu, Paris, 1597, pp. 56, 61b, 62, 62b.)

In the very last year of the sixteenth century appeared the anonymous work entitled *Le Triumphe des dames*. It offers little more than a summarizing of all the arguments in favor of women that had appeared up to that moment. The author begins with the statement that « la femme est plus digne que l'homme en toutes choses » (1). The reasons that are offered for this statement are many and include the following : the time, place and material of creation ; the fact that she is the most beautiful of all the works of God ; she is cleaner, for when she washes her face and hands the water remains pure (this statement had been made by other preceding authors) ; she is the last and therefore the most perfect work of God ; she was the greatest pleasure offered in Paradise, which is proved by the fact that man was willing to lose all else to please her ; she represented to man the blessing of God which was manifested in her creation ; man, and not woman was guilty of the original sin ; Christ chose to be incarnate in man, the lowest form, in order to redeem the

(1) *Le Triumphe des dames*, Rouen, 1599 (no paging).

sin of pride by humility, and because man's form was the symbol of sin and suffering.

« La seconde est quelle a este dedens le paradis formee en la compagnie des anges et nō pas lhomme qui fut cree avecques les bestes au champ damacene hors de paradis terrestre. Et cest une des raisons pour quoy la femme a beaute et plus de vertu semblable a la figure angelique...

La IIII^e est que elle est cree du milieu de lhōme et non pas de ses extremittez. Comme au moyen ou est la vertu et la plus noble chose demeure de lame cest le cuer.

La VI^e raison est pource quelle est plus necte. ...Cest assauoir q̄ apres q̄ la fēme se sera lauee vne fois le visage ou les mains pas songneuse diligence toutes les fois q̄ apres se lauera telle demourra leaue et aussi clere comme feust de son commencement. Et par le contraire aduient de lhomme lequel se par faitz innombrables se lauoit tousiours leau deuiendra trouble, comme il soit cree de la salle vappeur de la terre, et la femme est de chair nette purifiee.

La huytiesme raison si est pour estre ung des plaisirs de paradis laquelle na pas este des mendres, le premier homme le monstra quant pour iceluy a voulu perdre tous les autres pour non reffuser la pomme offerte d' sa liberalle main.

Lacteur monstre a la louenge et exaltation des femmes que nostre seigneur ne voulut point naistre en semblāce d'femme, afin q̄ les fēmes ne fussent point obligees a la peine et coulpe de lhomme. ...Comme il soit quil voullust racheter le peche dorgueil par son contraire qui est humilité. Il cōuenoit aussi pareillement quil prist la plus humble et basse figure, et non pas la plus excellente. Et par consequant il conuint en blasme en reproche des hommes et en la louenge des femmes q̄ nostre seigneur ait pris figure de homme et non pas de femme, comme la mesme figure soit accusation de la coulpe et tesmoing de la peine. »

(*Le Triumphe des dames*, Rouen, 1599, no paging.)

If it were not for the fact that these same ideas are to reappear in the works of certain authors of the seven-

teenth century one might conclude that this was the final word upon the subject from a century in which theology had exerted a wide-spread influence. One is tempted to speculate whether the authors who used again and again these arguments based on theological beliefs were merely imitating each other, or whether such theories represented their own thoughts.

While a few of the writers of the century were counselling that *all* women should be educated, there was one who did not accept that idea. This was Agrippa d'Aubigné, who expressed his views in a letter to his daughters.

He lauded the great intellectual attainments of many women: Elizabeth of England, who was able to talk to eight ambassadors in their various languages, and who so ably ruled her country in a period when all Europe was in turmoil ; the duchess of Rohan and her daughter Anne whose works have put to shame those of many men ; Marguerite de Navarre ; Louise Labé, the Sappho of her age ; Mademoiselle de Gournay ; and especially Loyse Sarrasin, who was capable of teaching languages, particularly Greek and Hebrew, which she knew as well as French, and to whom he owed his knowledge of Greek ; and finally his mother who had left him a Greek copy of St. Basil with her own annotations.

« Je ne blasme pas vostre desir d'apprendre avec vos freres ; je ne voudrois destourner ny eschauffer, et encor plustost le premier que le dernier, ce que j'ay apris en la cognoissance de plusieurs femmes savantes, et de leur succez comme j'en diray mon advis à la fin ; et pour ce que vous désirez savoir celles de cette sorte qui sont venuës à ma cognoissance, j'en diray un mot brievement.

.....Mais je garde pour la fin deux personnes qui m'ont esté plus cheres ; l'une est Loyse Sarrasin, Genevoise honorée de plusieurs doctes, et qui ayant passés par tous les degrez de science s'est veüe capable, si le sexe luy eust permis, de faire des leçons publiques principalement aux langues, ayant la Grecque et l'Hebray que en main comme la Françoisé. J'étois entierement destourné de la Grecque sans elle ; mais elle ayant recogneu en moy quelque aiguillon d'amour en son endroit, se servit de ceste puissance pour me

forcer par reproches, par doctes injures ausquelles je prenois plaisir, par la prison qu'elle me donnoit dans son cabinet comme à un enfant de la à treize ans, à faire les themes et les vers grecs qu'elle me donnoit. »

(D'Aubigné, T. Agrippa, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Réaume et de Caussade, 6 vols., Paris, 1873-92, « A mes filles touchant les femmes doctes de nostre siecle », vol. I, pp. 446-448.)

But although d'Aubigné utters words of praise for these women of such great learning, he is far from believing that all women should receive a training similar to theirs. Such knowledge, in his opinion, is suitable only for those of high rank, and is entirely unnecessary for girls of average means such as his own daughters. It tends to encourage in them contempt for their associates including their husbands, and indifference to their household duties. In this point of view he resembles Erasmus, who, as we have already seen, differentiated between the training of a wealthy noblewoman and that of a girl of lower social rank.

« Je viens à vous dire mon advis de l'utilité que peuvent recevoir les femmes par l'excellence d'un tel savoir ; c'est que je lay veu presque toujours inutile aux Demoiselles de moyenne condition, comme vous, car les moins heureuses en ont plus tost abusé qu'usé ; les autres ont trouvé ce labeur inutile, essayant ce que l'on dit communement, que quand le rossignol a des petits qu'il ne chante plus. Je dirai encor qu'une elevation d'esprit desmesuree hausse le cœur aussy, dequoy j'ay veu arriver deux maux, le mepris du menage et la pauvreté, celui d'un mary qui n'en fait pas tant, et de la dissension. Je conclus ainsy que je ne voudrois aucunement inciter au labeur des lettres autres que les princesses qui sont par leur condition obligees au soin, à la cognoissance, à la suffisance, aux gestions et auctoritez des hommes, et c'est là où le savoir peut réussir comme à la Royné Elizabet. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 449, 450.)

One of the most curious figures of the sixteenth century

is that of Marie de Gournay, who is best known, perhaps, as the *filles d'alliance* of Montaigne, but who has an especial interest for us as one of the staunchest defenders of the rights of her sex that the century produced (1).

Bonnefon, in speaking of her, says that in tastes, language, and the nature of her intelligence she never really belonged to the age in which she was born. The fact that she displayed with too evident pride her great knowledge won for her no admiration in a land in which the *femme savante* received so little sympathy. Rather was it one of the principal causes for the almost general attitude of ridicule whenever her name was mentioned. She was too frequently in evidence with her polemical writings, at a period when such writings were rather out of date, to remain in touch with her contemporaries and thus the breach grew ever wider between them and her. In an ever-changing world she remained unaltered, fixed in her convictions. Another cause contributing to her unpopularity was her too great frankness, accompanied by a lack of tact (2). She represents to us the transition to the *pédante* of the seventeenth century, and could easily have been in some respects at least, the prototype of Damophile or Philaminte (3).

From early childhood Marie de Gournay was a student. From her autobiography we learn that much of her study was done in private and without the aid of teachers, due to the antagonism of her mother to her daughter's thirst for learning. She even learned Latin without a grammar by placing French translations side by side with the Latin originals. From some one, unnamed by her, she learned Greek grammar and made fair progress in the language, although she never fully mastered it. It is

(1) Cf. BONNEFON, *Montaigne et ses amis*, 2 vols., Paris, 1898, vol. II, p. 315.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 315, 316.

(3) The friendship between Marie de Gournay and Montaigne may seem somewhat inconsistent in view of her reputation as a *bas bleu* and his well-known aversion to such women. It might be possible, however, that he was led to formulate his severe strictures against them, as a result of his friendship with her. It might well be that even his normal love of flattery was not sufficient to protect him from occasional ennui in face of the presence and conversation of the much satirized *savante*.

not difficult to imagine the effect produced upon this young pedant totally lacking experience in life, by the *Essais* of Montaigne, when at the age of eighteen she discovered them (1).

Marie de Gournay's real originality does not consist in the fact that on all occasions and against all adversaries she was the champion of women against the injustice of men. It goes without saying that attacks upon women or praises of their merit had been commonplaces in French literature long before the day of Marie de Gournay, as we have already shown from numerous examples. But her predecessors had had always as their evident aim the proof of the overwhelming *superiority* of one or the other sex. She proceeds in a different fashion, for according to her thesis man and woman are simply and solely two *equal* beings.

This theory she expounded fully in a book published in 1622, *L'Egalité des hommes et des femmes*, in which she begins by saying that nature herself is opposed to either the inferiority or superiority of one sex to the other, wherefore she, who wished to avoid extremes, intended to consider them as equals (2). Unlike her contemporaries and predecessors she intended to prove her point neither by reasons nor examples, for her stubborn opponents might overthrow the former, and the latter was too common a method of procedure. Instead, her purpose was to use the authority of God, the Church Fathers, and the great thinkers of all times (3). The most interesting and amazing point of all is, that all of her authorities are men.

As others before her, she used Plato and Socrates as her first two authorities. She could not prevent herself from using general, if not specific, illustrations, for she said that women in Greece were inventors of the fine arts, and had excelled as teachers and examples of perfection and virtue in Alexandria (4).

(1) Cf. SCHIFF, M., *La Fille d'alliance de Montaigne, Marie de Gournay*. Paris, 1910, p. 2.

(2) Cf. de GOURNAY, *L'Egalité des hommes et des femmes*, 1622, p. 7.

(3) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 10.

(4) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

If women attain a high degree of scholarship less often than men it is merely the natural consequence of poor teaching. It is indeed a marvel that they succeed at all in face of the many obstacles which they encounter. It is very probable that if educational opportunities were the same, the gulf between the two sexes would no longer exist. In this theory we see the influence of Montaigne's point of view upon Mlle de Gournay.

« Que si les dames arriuēt moins souuēt que les hōmes, aux degrez d'excellence, c'est merueille que le defaut de bonne instructiō, voire l'affluēce de la mauuaise expresse et professoire ne face pis, les gardant d'y pouuoir arriuier du tout. Se trouue til (sic) plus de difference des hommes à elles que d'elles à elles mesmes, selon l'institution qu'elles ont prinse selon qu'elles sont esleuées en ville ou village, ou selon les Nations. Et pourquoy leur institution ou nourriture aux affaires et lettres à l'egal des hommes, ne rempliroit elle ce vuide, qui paroist ordinairement entre les testes des mesmes hommes et les leurs : (puis la nourriture est de telle importance qu'vn de ses membres). »

(*Ibid.*, p. 12.)

After citing Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle, she turned to her contemporaries and immediate predecessors and chose Erasmus, Politian, Agrippa and Castiglione as examples of men who had opposed the maligners of the female sex, and had manifested themselves as their partisans by claiming that they have an aptitude for any office. Women may be consoled by the fact that none of those who decry the ability of women can be numbered among men of great learning, while the authorities she had just cited certainly were. After all, no really intelligent man would say that women are inferior in merit to men, since that would imply that the aforesaid authors were ignorant, and likewise that they were false in their statements (1).

After all, says Marie de Gournay, the difference in sex is only for the purpose of the propagation of the species,

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

and in that man is like all other animals. But he differs from them in that he has a soul, which soul was bestowed equally upon both sexes. As a result man and woman are essentially the same thing. If their nature is one and the same, it follows logically that their acts are the same and should receive equal praise or blame.

« Au surplus l'animal humain n'est homme ny femme, à le bien prendre, les sexes estants faicts non simplement, mais *secundum quid*, comme parle l'Eschole : c'est-à-dire pour la seule propagation. L'vnique forme et difference de cet animal, ne consiste qu'en l'ame humaine... L'homme et la femme sont tellement vns, que si l'homme est plus que la femme, la femme est plus que l'homme. ...Ainsi parle apres le grād Saint Basile. La vertu de l'homme et de la femme est la mesme chose, puis que Dieu leur a decerné mesme creation et mesme honneur : *masculum et foeminam fecit eos*. — Or en ceux de qui la Nature est vne et mesme, il faut que les actions aussi le soient, et que l'estime et loyer en suite soient pareils, où les œuvres sont pareilles » (1).

(*Ibid.*, pp. 18, 19.)

When St. Paul forbids them to preach in the churches, it is not because he feels contempt for their ability, but for fear lest they tempt the men among their hearers by their beauty and grace. This idea had already occurred to other champions of the sex.

« ...Que si Saint Paul, ...leur deffend le ministere et leur commande le silence en l'Eglise ; il est euidente que ce n'est point par aucun mespris ; ouy bien seulement, de crainte qu'elles n'emeuent les tentations, par cette montre si claire et publique qu'il faudroit faire en ministrant et preschant, de ce qu'elles ont de grace et de beauté plus que les hommes. »

(*Ibid.*, pp. 20, 21.)

But God himself testified to his faith in their ability and their equality with men when he gave them the gift

(1) This is an old theory of Plato, later to be reasserted by Saint-Simon and his followers, — namely, that the human being is neither man nor woman, but man and woman, for the two sexes complete and fulfill, rather than oppose each other.

of prophecy and established them as judges and leaders of the people.

« Dieu mesme leur a departy les dons de Prophetie indifferamment avec les hommes, les ayant establies aussi pour Juges, institutrices et conductrices de son Peuple fidelle en paix et en guerre ; et qui plus est, rendu triomphantes avec luy des hautes victoires, qu'elles ont aussi maintefois emportées et arborées en divers lieux du monde. »

(*Ibid.*, p. 20.)

When Marie de Gournay confines herself to proofs drawn from the Bible she is less fortunate in her material, or rather in her use of it. She chooses such facts as the following : only to a woman, Mary Magdalen, was the promise made that wherever the Gospel was preached her love would be mentioned ; women were witnesses of the resurrection in order that they might tell it to the apostles ; the birth of Christ was made known to a woman as well as a man ; that Christ was born of a woman, — and one who was perfect above all others ; the naïve statement that Christ chose to become incarnate in the form of man because otherwise he might have been hampered in the exercise of his ministry by the restrictions imposed upon women ; man is not superior to woman in matrimony since God says that the two are to become one, and that the man is to leave his parents to follow his wife. Even if woman were required to subject herself to man as punishment for the first sin, that does not prove the superior dignity of men, for why should anyone created in the image of God, who is permitted to participate in the Eucharist and to share the joys of Paradise, immortality, and eternal contemplation of God along with men be considered their inferior ? (1)

In addition to the work just examined, Marie de Gournay was the author of *Le Grief des dames*, 1626, in which she gives full vent to her indignation because of the base condition in which her sex is placed and the interdiction to express their thoughts which is practically laid upon them. If a man deigns to discuss any question with a

(1) Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-25.

woman, says she, it is done always with an air of amusement and condescension because she is entering upon an unequal struggle. Men even refuse to read what women have produced to see whether it is really as worthless as they pretend, while they themselves are only too often very mediocre writers and scholars. Such men are daring indeed when they venture to set up their opinion against that of such renowned scholars as Socrates, Plato, Plutarch, Seneca, St. Basil and St. Jerome (Cf. *l'Egalité*), who make no distinction between the merits and faculties of the sexes (1). (In early times women were permitted to baptize, and later prohibitions placed upon the sex were due to the hostility and jealousy of those men who made the canons). God himself honors women equally with men, as is to be found in his Holy Word, and the ignorant men who seek to manifest their contempt for women cannot have greater weight than the authority of the Scriptures and the great scholars of past ages.

Like Montaigne she declares that their existent inferiority was due to a defective education, and those defects once removed — « leur institution ou nourriture... ne frapperait-elle pas ce coup de remplir la distance qui se voit entre les entendements des hommes et ceux des femmes » ? (2)

Therefore the servitude in which women are is not due to the will of God, nor established by natural law, it is due rather to the ever-changing will of man. Woman has, therefore, a right to claim equality (3).

(1) Cf. *Le Grief des dames* published in Schiff, *Marie de Gournay*, pp. 89-97.

(2) Cf. ABENSOUR, *Introduction* p. 12.

(3) Cf. the Chevalier de l'Escale who has exactly the same idea as to the cause of women's inferiority.

« L'infériorité des femmes, s'écrie le chevalier Pierre de l'Escale... mais elle vient de l'inégalité de l'éducation. Les hommes fréquentent les collèges, les universités et, par des voyages, forment leur jeunesse... les femmes ne bougent de chez elles, non plus que tortues. Etonnons-nous donc qu'elles soient moins instruites que nous ! »

Cited from ABENSOUR, L., *L'Histoire générale du féminisme*, Paris, 1921, p. 152, taken from l'ESCALE, P., *Le Champion des femmes*, Paris, 1618.

CONCLUSION

The sixteenth century's attitude towards women is not in any sense of the word a settled one. There is no one theory which could be called characteristic of the century. While there are certain outstanding champions of the sex, such as Martin Franc, Cornelius Agrippa, François de Billon and Marie de Gournay, there are its equally important adversaries, — Gratian du Pont, Acidalius Valens and Rabelais. If we study the history of women's education for the century we find that in spite of the many treatises in which women's intelligence is lauded, and in spite of their training being advocated by such a man as Erasmus, the education of the sex was far from being a general thing. It was confined almost exclusively to women of noble birth who were practically required, because of the widespread interest in culture resulting from the Renaissance, to devote themselves to some branch of learning in order to vie with the cultured Italian women who were found at court, and to be able to play their part in the society of men.

The first part of the century still shows the influence of the quarrel growing out of the *Roman de la rose*. The arguments offered *pro* and *con* show little advance over those used by Christine and her opponents in their famous debate. Many of them are double-barrelled, and are used with equal facility by both sides, one of the best examples being that based upon the history of Creation. Several authors emphasize the fact that both sexes are alike as far as the soul is concerned, and that the only differences between them are physical ones. It is interesting to note that several of those who advocate education

for women, — Erasmus, Jean Bouchet, and d'Aubigné, — do not think that it should be the same for all women but should be determined by their social position and their needs. Quite frequent are citations from philosophers, historians, saints and fathers of the church to prove the abilities of women.

The second period is that of the famous *Querelle des femmes* which grew out of the *Parfaicte amye* of Héroët. It is the period in which Platonism was dominant, a philosophy which exalted love, but did not at the same time exalt the conception of woman. She is to be loved with a love purified of everything sensual, as an expression of the supreme beauty found perfected in God, but this adoration of her in the abstract did little or nothing to elevate her in the minds of those who had for her in reality (in her concrete form) nothing but contempt. It is during this period that the school of Lyons flourished, and that the poetesses of that city were lauded as examples to be imitated if France wished to rival Italy. It is the period in which Italian influence was strongest, as may be seen from the part played by *Il Cortigiano* of Castiglione. One book which is especially important concerns itself little with Platonism, and goes back for its material to the earlier period. It is that of de Billon, who offers nothing new, but who is nevertheless one of the boldest champions of women that the century produced.

The last part of the century is perhaps the most interesting. While many of the old arguments reappear, new life is given to the problem by the writings of such people as Valens, Henri (II) Estienne and Marie de Gournay. It is the first time that an author has attempted to prove that women are not human beings, that any effort has been made to advocate the entrance of women into the functions of government, and to prove, by citations drawn from men only, that the two sexes are equal. It is the first time also that the *pédante* is definitely attacked, and that the assertion is made that women are, and always will be superior, if they will be satisfied to reign through their charm and beauty rather than because of intellectual attainments or political privileges.

It is interesting to note that practically no effort is made

to overthrow marriage. While some advocated more freedom for the wife, and may have seemed to desire the equivalent of the liberal divorce laws so prevalent today, none felt that woman had anything to gain from the abolition of marriage, but rather that she had everything to lose.

Any student of manners and customs during the Renaissance is well aware of the general attitude towards marriage. It was regarded as a purely physical bond which might by some fortunate chance be also a union of affection. But it was above all a social state, one prescribed by the necessities of economic life and established upon a commercial basis. To demand that love be an integral and necessary part of all marriage, or even to expect harmony of tastes and ideas was to go too far, ask too much and court almost certain disaster (1).

This attitude towards marriage was characteristic not only of the men of the Renaissance period, but also of the women. Women, even the most advanced of the feminists of the early part of the century, felt that marriages should be arranged by the family

« En France toutes les femmes, depuis Louise de Savoie jusqu'à Anne de France, toutes celles qui se sont érigées en professeurs de la jeunesse féminine, insisterent sur cette idée que la liberté de choix dans le mariage est oeuvre de folie et amène la ruine. De même Vivès conseille de marier une fille « par délibération de ses parens et poursuite de mari », car l'amour « précipite les pucelles en mil dangiers ». Si Marguerite d'Angouleme apporte à ce sujet des idées nouvelles, dues à l'influence des doctrines néo-platoniques, ces idées ne comptent pour rien en France sinon à partir de 1540 environ ».

O'Connor, *op. cit.*, pp 67, 68.)

There was, however, little restraint upon the young wife, who seldom hesitated, when occasion offered, to break her marriage vows (2).

Certain exponents of the *esprit gaulois* sought to relieve

(1) Cf. O'CONNOR, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

(2) Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

the monotony of married life by authorizing outside excursions in the field of sentimental relations which were accepted as license for unrestricted sensuality by those thus inclined (1). It is a fairly frequent thing to find in the *contes* or *romans* of the period the story of a married woman who has a lover, that is, according to the seventeenth century's definition :

« Celui qui, ayant de l'amour pour une femme a fait connaître ses sentiments, et est aimé ou fâché de se faire aimer. »

(Littré, s. v. *amant*.)

but who still remains faithful to her marriage vows.

Such a person is the heroine of Hélienne de Crenne's novel, *Les Angoisses douloureuses qui procedent d'amours*, 1538 (date of *privilege*) (2). Alongside of the Christian conception of love is to be found always this other which is purely pagan, and according to which love is not something spiritual and to be suppressed in its physical form, but a thing entirely natural and simple and quite pleasing to God in its manifestations.

The numerous treatises on the merits and demerits of women which were written during the century prove that it was a burning question with its authors. These did not in all probability persuade any one that either side was right if he had not already leaned to that conviction. For many people they were simply the formulation and expression of opinions long held. None of them resulted in adding to the dignity and worth of women. Yet it is undeniable that at the end of the century women played a more important part in society than at the beginning.

(1) « Quant à la femme mariée, elle n'a qu'un devoir, c'est d'aimer son mari, si pourtant il arrive que la haine ou les mauvais traitements de son époux détournent de lui son affection et qu'ayant rencontré sur sa route un gentilhomme plus digne d'elle, elle se sente portée vers lui par quelque irrésistible attrait, qu'elle se garde bien de lui laisser deviner son inclination, ses regrets et de lui donner ainsi des armes contre elle même. » (REYNIER, G., *Le Roman sentimental avant « L'Astrée »*, Paris, 1908, p. 209). This marks the influence of Platonism on the manners of the time.

(2) Cf. résumé in REYNIER, *Le Roman sentimental avant « L'Astrée »*, Paris, 1908, pp. 102-111.

This growth in influence was due solely to the ability of certain leading women, those celebrated by Brantôme, for example, in the *Vies des dames illustres* when he speaks of his illustrious contemporaries. It was their personal merit, the prestige due to their noble birth or their position at court, their learning, which rendered them superior to many men intellectually — these things more than all the polemics in their favor, which strengthened the power of women (1).

At the beginning of the study of the sixteenth century it was stated that there were recognizable in its literature three distinct currents : 1° theological ; 2° *esprit des fabliaux* ; 3° *esprit courtois*. In conclusion it would be well to see who were the chief exponents of each of these movements, and of what importance were the contributions made.

For the first we have such writers as Martin Franc, Cornelius Agrippa, Gratian du Pont, Valens, and even Marie de Gournay. They contributed little new, but rather re-affirmed and strengthened what had already been said by adding to the authority of the Bible that of the Church Fathers.

For the second we have Rabelais, Brantôme and Tahureau, and at times certainly Montaigne. This current is more important at this time than it will prove to be in the seventeenth century, although even there the old traditional concept of woman reappears, particularly with regard to women and marriage.

The last, *esprit courtois*, changes its name and to some extent its form and becomes what is known as Neo-Platonism. Its influence is remarkably strong, and we see it manifested in the writings of such people as Marguerite de Navarre, Héroët, Hélisenne de Crenne. The main importance of this current is that it gave new life to the *querelle des femmes*, and thus called forth many polemics which were in their turn to furnish arguments to a later generation.

A transition to the seventeenth century is to be found

(1) Cf. REYNIER, *op. cit.*, pp. 216, 217.

in the writings and character of Mlle de Gournay (1). Her idea of the equality of the two sexes was to be affirmed, amplified and worked out according to Cartesian methods by Poulain de la Barre in the following century. The *pédante* as personified by her was to become one of the favorite objects of satire of such writers as Molière and the abbé de Pure, and to give a new direction to the question of feminism in the seventeenth century.

(1) It is because of the fact that she is recognized as a transition writer that she has been included among the authors of the sixteenth century, although from the chronological point of view she belongs to the seventeenth.

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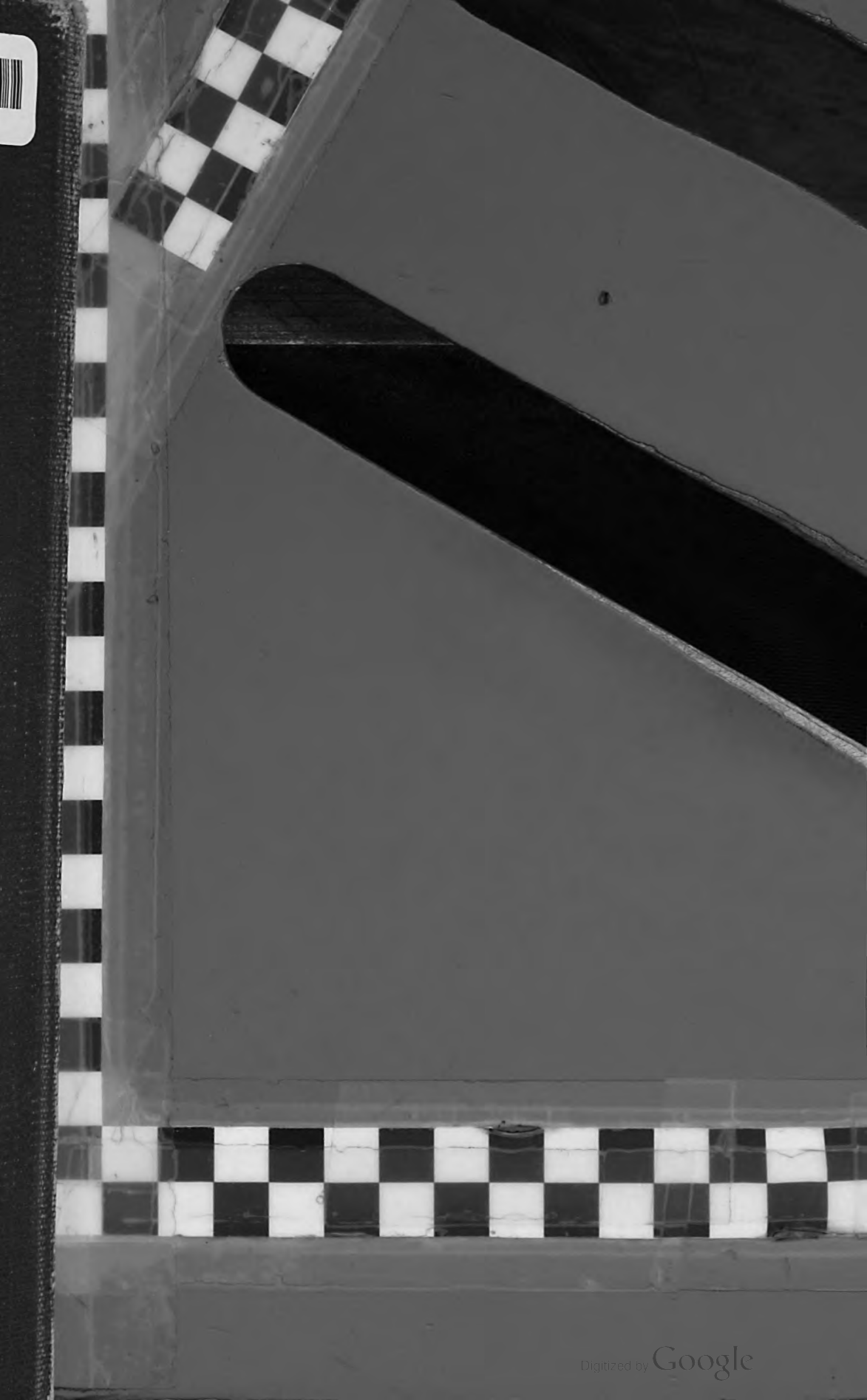




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